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# The Sewanee Review

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January, 1916

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## Contributors to the January Review

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WILLIAM HALLER is a member of the teaching staff in Columbia University.

L. WARDLAW MILES is an associate professor of English in Princeton University.

EDGAR W. KNIGHT is head of the department of education in Trinity College, North Carolina.

HYDER E. ROLLINS is a fellow in Harvard University.

H. ST. GEORGE TUCKER is a member of the faculty in the North Carolina College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts.

A. MARINONI is a professor in the department of modern languages in the University of Arkansas.

A. M. CONWAY is a resident of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

H. L. CREEK is a member of the faculty in the University of Illinois.

DUDLEY H. MILES is head of the department of English in the Evander Childs High School, New York City.



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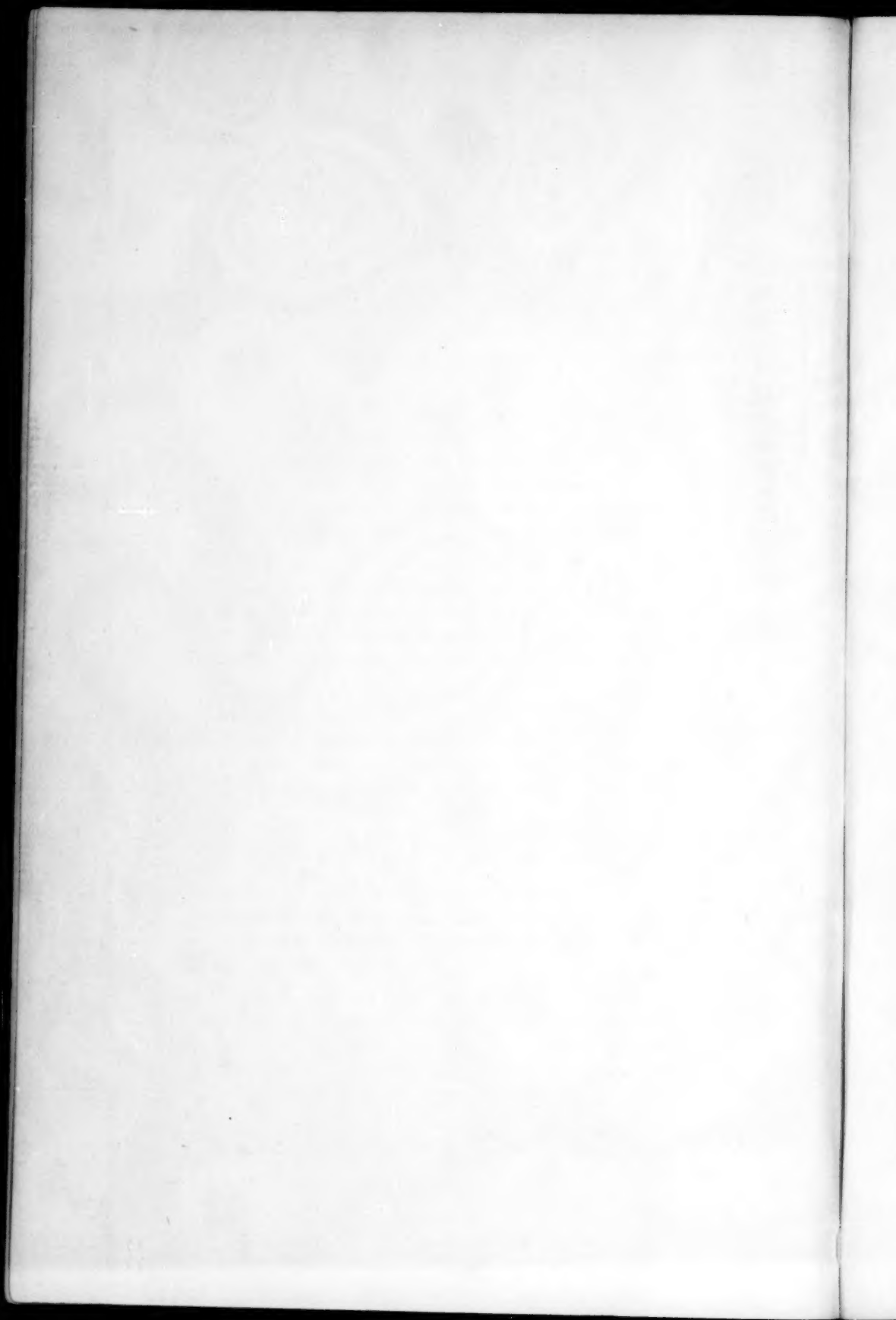
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## BYRON AND THE BRITISH CONSCIENCE

In the autumn of 1822 a comedy of profound significance was enacted at Edinburgh. George IV, spent-out rake, sot, and dandy, "the first gentleman of Europe," sixty years old but king at last, went on a royal progress to his northern kingdom. He was sodden with the profligacy of London and a recent debauch with politicians in Dublin; he was heir to the house of Hanover and the worst of its vices, but Scotland with Sir Walter at its head fêted him as liege lord and God-given prince, fêted him in Holyrood where the last royal person to be so greeted by his people had been bonny Prince Charlie himself, as all the world knew from *Waverley*. Scott rowed out in the rain from Leith and clambered aboard "The Royal George" to welcome the king. That potentate, calling for a bottle of highland whisky, as the thing most appropriate to his taste and the occasion, drank to the enraptured bard. Then Scott begged the gift of the goblet as a boon from his royal master. Only Sir Walter and a Scotchman could have taken such a situation seriously. He put the glass into the tail of his coat, and carefully held it in front of him all the way home, in order that this rare memento, destined to be handed down to his children's children,—a goblet from which George IV had drunk whisky,—should be kept safe. Upon reaching home, however, he found the poet Crabbe just arrived on a visit, forgot the glass in his coat-tail, embraced his friend, and sat down. Lady Scott was relieved to learn that she had not left her scissors in the chair. The rest of the story of the king's progress not even the faithful Lockhart could tell with a straight face. The clans marched in full regalia, the good citizens of Edinburgh put on the once-despised kilties of the once-hated

highlanders, Hanoverian George himself appeared in the Stuart tartan, and so also, to the dandy king's discomfiture, did that son of a London alderman who had come with him as his boon comrade of the cups, Sir William Curtis. All Scotland, hypnotized by Sir Walter into a spasm of loyalty, paraded bare knees through the streets of "auld Reekie" to the sound of bag-pipes in honor of a king named George,—and such a king at that! We need not dwell long on the incongruity of this scene. Fortunately we know that it was an idea of aristocracy and not the vicious person who happened to be king that Scott revered; but it may be sad as well as comic when the vicious are revered by the righteous for any reason whatever.

Into such a posture could loyalty to the aristocratic ideal betray one who, like Scott, in his daily life practised those virtues which are the basis of sincere democracy. Among English poets at the same time, however, there was an aristocrat,—an aristocrat by reason of birth, habits, and many of his feelings,—who could never have been captivated by such a show. Byron, though he was indeed, as the Tory press reminded him, "one of the hereditary counsellors of the King," saw royalty with eyes undimmed by such imaginings as Scott's. Of this very affair at Edinburgh he wrote:—

"My muse 'gan weep, but, ere a tear was spilt,  
She caught Sir William Curtis in a kilt!  
While thronged the chiefs of every Highland clan  
To hail their brother, Vich Ian Alderman!  
Guildhall grows Gael, and echoes with Erse roar,  
While all the Common Council cry 'Claymore!'  
To see proud Albyn's tartans as a belt  
Gird the gross sirloin of a city Celt,  
She burst into a laughter so extreme,  
That I awoke—and lo! it was no dream!"

In the notorious *Lines to a Lady Weeping* Byron attacked George directly, and in *Windsor Poetics*, representing him as standing between the tombs of "headless Charles" and "heartless Henry," called him "Charles to his people" and "Henry to his wife." Not against George alone, but against all kings and privileged classes Byron could rail. He spoke for Catholics and frame-breakers in the House of Lords. He sympathized with



the Luddite rioters so strongly as to cry "Down with all kings but King Ludd." He admired the republicans of America, and whereas his greatest heroes are such men as Washington and Napoleon, the object of his most scathing irreverence is George III. The strongest side of Byron's spirit shows him to be a hot rebel against the restraints and privileges upon which aristocracy was based. Yet aristocrat he himself was with peculiar intensity. He was proud of his extraction from a family noble since the days of the Conqueror. He was educated,—after his unlucky childhood,—at a public school with other noblemen for intimates. He lived at Cambridge like other young men of his rank. If he treated inferiors with more than usual kindness, it was the kindness of the patrician. When he wrote poetry, he pretended that he wrote indeed, as Scott said of him, "with the negligent ease of a man of quality," and even when breaking with debt, gave his copyrights away on the ground that it was beneath a gentleman's dignity to take money for writing. He boasted that every member of his family was an only child; that like lions and tigers, there was but one Byron to a litter. Far away in Albania, he could at first be friendly with a stranger, the only other Englishman in the place, and then give the man the cold shoulder when he attempted to introduce himself at a social function, because, forsooth, it was not the commoner's privilege to make the first motion toward formal acquaintanceship with a nobleman. It is needless to illustrate further. Though a born rebel, Byron was also a born aristocrat whose conduct and feelings were in many ways typical of his class.

Such inconsistency between ideals and behavior as we see when Scott reverences George IV and when Byron flouts aristocracy was characteristic of the age when these men lived. The march of progress is not the march of an army. Neither the whole body nor each individual that goes to compose it moves forward as a unit; there is a doubling on the tracks and a facing both ways at once which often leads the most straightforward of marchers upon the horns of a dilemma. This explains much of the vogue of Scott's romances of feudalism in an age of revolution against feudalism. It explains even more clearly Byron's satire and his quarrel with the British people.

A youth avid of sensation, he had run through the regular pursuits of the young aristocrat, and his vices had been condoned by the self-righteous British conscience. When he could not belie his own nature, however, and reform as he had sinned in accordance with the code of aristocratic conduct, British conscience damned him. He then turned and damned the British conscience for condoning offences such as he had committed, and for punishing him because of one that seemed to him far less vital. The inconsistency of the man met the inconsistency of the people, and both became infuriated. The situation tells much about the social ideals of Europe, but to understand it properly we must first inquire how such inconsistency arose.

The needs of human society out of which grew the feudal system naturally made fighting the most honorable pursuit a man could follow, since upon fighting depended the safety of the system itself. The result was an aristocracy maintained by a patriarchial system of property and inheriting the function of military protection for the rest of society. When the idealistic members of this aristocracy sought to explain their own position, they saw that their social order, as represented by such things as religion and the family, or more concretely, the church and woman, depended upon them for defence, and thus chivalry arose. Vague at first and the subject of thought only of a small class, chivalry gradually worked itself out into set rules of conduct, and with advancing peace and population, became disseminated through the rest of society. Crystalized in this form, men have continued to grip these rules almost as the essential elements of civilization, often after many of them have ceased to further the very ideals they were at first meant to serve. And the men most subject in the eyes of all to such hereditary customs are those to whom inheritance is a matter of the greatest importance, that is, the members of the hereditary aristocracy. Nevertheless these customs have been constantly modified with the increasing amenities of life while still preserving the mark of their origin. Military protection, for instance, being originally of such prime importance, the gentleman could permit no other pursuit to interfere with its performance; he had to hold himself in readiness to fight. The heir of a house,

therefore, generally refrained from entering any trade or profession, and as time went on attendance at court took the place of ancient warlike duties. His younger brothers, meanwhile, in order to maintain themselves honorably in the piping days of peace, entered certain gentlemanly callings,—the church, the law, politics, the specialized military service of army and navy. The protection of woman, furthermore, took the form of a definite etiquette of gallantry toward women of the upper classes. Even in the beginning, be it noted, the chivalric gentleman did not include all women as proper objects for individual protection. The knight of romance fought no dragons for the kitchen wench, and the lady scorned the scullion who would slay her giants for her. Only after democracy had swung its scythe did washer-women become ladies, and ladies become women. Before that, these social distinctions had become more and more marked, and ladies and gentlemen more and more careful as to whom they associated with.

Such in a general way is the later development of some of the social ideals of feudalism. Let us recall Lancelot and Cœur-de-Lion, Guinevere and Eleanor of Aquitaine, and then think of the dandies of the regency, of Queen Charlotte and Fanny Burney. The year 1800 saw the lives of the men and women of the upper classes in England running in certain grooves of custom to which the British conscience, blind for the most part to the iniquities which these things not only permitted but even fostered, clung as to the very ark of the covenant. Fanny Burney, for instance, had been asked to befriend Madame de Genlis, a woman whom she believed to have been wronged and slandered, and whom she was inclined to admire and help. In order to do nothing improper, however, in her position at court, she first asked for advice from Queen Charlotte. The Queen agreed that Madame de Genlis had been wronged, but enjoined Miss Burney to have no correspondence with a person who had even been mentioned in connection with evil. Thus did the British people, although intensely preoccupied with what they called morality, think morality to be merely a matter of conduct in accord with certain conventions and not with any ideal truth. The moral duty of one good woman to

uphold another who had been wronged never entered Queen Charlotte's pious head; to preserve the fetich of one's own good name was her sole thought, let the innocent suffer however unjustly they might.

What the gentlemen in this state of society should do with their youth was a perilous question. They were young males endowed with wealth, vigor, and social prestige. Few of them could go forth to seek adventure like Scott's heroes; custom forbade most useful occupations and sanctioned idleness. Of course there were moral consequences to such a situation which had to be provided for, and the provision made by the British conscience was all that tacit theory of condonation implied in the phrase "sowing his wild oats." This meant that any young gentleman, having been trained in the brutality of the public schools, and then released in the university or in London, might without opprobrium, gamble, drink, and intrigue with loose, women. All this would be merely sowing his wild oats; but at the proper time he must marry a young lady carefully reared for the sole purpose of marrying him, settle down, get heirs, and become a pillar of church and state. This was the theory, and it was a credit to British character that it worked as well as it did. But the innate immorality of it was inescapable, and at the beginning of the last century the British conscience had to shut its eyes hard to be blind to all the lapses of its young gentlemen. In the first place there was that "first gentleman of Europe," the Prince of Wales, Regent, and at last King George IV. His father, George III, was a young king with no time for wild oats. He was pious, proper, stubborn, and stupid, and so was his wife. His daughters could be kept within family bounds until it was time to turn them over to their husbands; his sons had to be given their heads at twenty-one. Never was there unluckier lot than that of George IV. Though the son of one George, he was the great-grandson of others not so impeccable, and he had two generations of wild oats to sow. As the heir of a young father he had a long time in which to do nothing but sow them. As heir to a king of autocratic temper there was particularly little that was both interesting and useful for him to do. Above all he had a generous lack of brains and moral



stamina. Under the circumstances, therefore, he had but two courses to choose from: either to live through years of dutiful boredom until his father should die, or to break away and sow wild oats for want of any more exciting occupation. It is not surprising that he did the latter, and then his parents made ill luck disastrous by their bad choice of a wife for him. In order to sympathize with this prince we have but to compare his career with the not wholly dissimilar one of his grand-nephew of our own day. "The first gentleman of Europe" was a title that people were fond of applying to George; it was the most significant title that he ever attained.

And it was this person whom it fell to the British conscience, not only to accept and excuse, but to exalt, for he came just in that spasm of conservatism which swept over England in revulsion against France and revolution. How this exaltation was managed by some we may see in Southey's *Vision of Judgment*. To the credit of British sanity, however, when George signally failed to fulfil the "wild oats" theory, and instead of settling decently down with his wife, spread his domestic scandal abroad under the noses of all Europe, he was, even though king, disgraced and rejected. But it was a sore dilemma that he put upon his subjects. For years this pious people had by parliamentary grant paid for his gambling, his drinking, his dandifying, and his mistresses; they had maintained an establishment of public immorality on the tacit understanding that eventually the wild oats should all be sown. At last the old king died, and the hour came when the new king of fifty-eight ought to have transformed himself into a bulwark of respectability. Instead of this, he sued in parliament for a divorce, violently excluded his wife from the coronation, and according to rumor, at least, was crowned drunk. Thus was public seal given to the shattering of all hopes, and in a convulsion of righteousness George was damned by public opinion,—damned, however, not so much for his vices, as for quarrelling in public with his wife. Even after this the old spell of royalty still swayed some glowing spirits, and so clean a man as Scott could still revere the king in so foul a man as George.

The British conscience did not really make up its mind about

its "first gentleman" until he was fifty-eight; Byron's case was decided on nearly the same grounds when he was twenty-eight. The careers of the two men are in fundamental ways strikingly similar. It is needless to rehearse details. Byron was also a young nobleman who followed the custom of sowing wild oats. We know enough about his life to tell that, even with due allowance for his curious inverse hypocrisy, there was the usual modicum of vice in Byron's young gentlemanhood. He too drank, gamed, had coaches and fine clothes, dandled with loose women, and heaped up debts to pay for these well-bred necessities. All this was done with Byronic picturesqueness,—he kept tame bears, did his drinking out of skulls, carried his college *fille-de-joie* around in boy's clothing,—but it was done; there could have been no secret about that. Then he blazed out as the latest sensation of London society of the Regency, and extending his intrigues to women of his own class, merely carried on the tradition more magnificently than usual. Caro Lamb made him famous in the rôle of "mad, bad, and dangerous to know," the Lady Frances Wedderburn Websters filled up the series, and the charming but notoriously profligate Lady Oxford closed the grand climacteric. Young, titled, handsome, an intense and fascinating personality, adding to these qualities the vogue of a popular poet and the pathos of lameness,—never had wild oats been sown with such appealing fervor, and never, not even by the prince himself, more conspicuously. At the end of it all Byron married, and here we must pause. What kind of person would such a man take for a wife? What effect would his previous career have upon the consideration given to him as a suitor?

The judgment on George would not have been so long delayed had his wife not been such a person as naturally to alienate the sympathies of Englishmen in her own right. The wife of Byron, however, was very near to their ideal of a perfect lady. We have already noted that the duty of protecting woman originally fell only to a small class of men, and the privilege of being protected only to a few women. As chivalry encouraged the qualities in man which would enable him to protect, so it also encouraged those qualities in woman which rendered protection

necessary. We have now traced the evolution of the "gentleman" type from one of these ideals, and have seen how George IV and his kind were its representatives. "The lady" is descended from the other. First of all it is evident that, in order to perform her function, she must not seem able to protect herself, or in other words, she must be pale to be interesting. In contrast to the freedom allowed to the young gentleman, therefore, she is carefully guarded and restrained by her parents, fenced in by an elaborate criss-cross of proprieties. Hands, feet, waist must be kept small, complexion must be shielded, and she must be able to faint. In order to keep herself in this appealing condition, she must do no physical labor, or the muscles of feet, hands, and abdomen would grow large with strength, and the cheeks ruddy, the nerves steady with health. Cut off from unladylike occupations, she found other more suitable employments. The lady of romance played on the lute, tended the sick and wounded, embroidered tapestries with the adventures of knights, listened to the tales of minstrels, went to church, polished up her knight's shield, inspired him in his battles, and rewarded him upon his return. In later times these pursuits were simply modernized. The lute became a spinnet, tapestry became fancy work, tending the sick and wounded became charity, listening to minstrels became reading, "accomplishments," and "blue-stockings," inspiring and rewarding her knight became catching a husband, and always she went to church. Virtue was the one thing presumably uppermost in her mind, the more so as virtue was for her quite precisely defined.

How deeply rooted this ideal of a young lady was, it is easy to show, but perhaps the heroines of Scott afford us the most familiar example. There is a chapter in *The Antiquary* which displays her functioning at her best. Isabella Wardour, the daughter of a country baronet, is the young lady who should reward Lovell, the hero, with her hand. Lovell differs in no respect from his brothers in the Waverley novels; there is nothing in his character, that is, which should prevent Isabella marrying him before Chapter I begins. As a virtuous young lady, however, she refuses to have anything to do with him for the

reason, not that she knows or thinks him to be an illegitimate son, but merely that she does not positively know him to be legitimate, and she cannot be protected by him unless he is a gentleman born. One night she and her father are caught by tide and storm under a precipice with no apparent escape. Though young and country-bred she is physically helpless in the peril that ensues. She clings to her old father for support. She can hardly keep pace with the speed at which he walks. She shrieks faintly as the breakers dash upon the rocks. Edie Ochiltree, the ancient beggar, comes to their assistance, and wraps his blue coat around her "to preserve her as much as possible from injury." Although the author says that she is able "to collect the powers of a mind naturally strong and courageous, and which rallied itself at this terrible juncture," nevertheless the only expedient she can think of is the obvious one of trying to climb up the cliff. Of course the hero comes to the rescue, and helps them to a rock out of reach of the sea. "It was a summer's night, doubtless; yet the probability was slender that a frame so delicate as that of Miss Wardour should survive till morning the drenching of the spray; and the dashing of the rain which now burst in full violence, accompanied with deep and heavy gusts of wind, added to the constrained and perilous circumstances of their situation.

"'The lassie!—the puir sweet lassie!' said the old man; 'mony such a night have I weathered at hame and abroad, but, God guide us, how can she ever win through it!'"

Isabella courageously exclaims that she can endure the night, but "so saying, her voice failed her—she sank down and would have fallen from the crag had she not been supported by Lovell and Ochiltree."

They are saved before morning, of course, at great peril to the hero, but even under these circumstances, Isabella does not forget herself. She departs with no acknowledgement to him for his services. He may have braved death for her, but maiden delicacy will not permit her to thank a man for saving her life at the risk of his own because it will not let her forget that the man's father may not have married his mother, and this in spite of the fact that there is a bar sinister in her own family. In



other words, she is so determined to be what custom declares virtuous that she does what is genuinely wrong under the delusion that it is right.

Scott may have conventionalized the characteristic traits. If there are any young women in his pages who rule their conduct with their brains, either they are not ladies, or like Di Vernon, they have been badly brought up. The Rowenas, Edith Bellen-dens, Rose Bradwardines are all alike, and follow the ladylike pursuits mentioned above. They are all virtuous, pious, kind and gentle, but inexperienced, helpless, and innocent. They do needlework, play or sing, and carry on some mild kind of study. Rose Bradwardine, for instance, has a little embowered library; Lucy Ashton collects ballads. If we wish to see these people in the flesh we have but to turn to Fanny Burney's diary, and read of the sisters of "the first gentleman." They sit in the parlors at Windsor, they go to chapel, they listen to concerts, they sew, they are kissed by their papa, they read only what has first been read and approved by their mother, and they wait to be married off to German princelings. How proper it was, and how stupid it must have been for the sons, and what wonder they took the course that they did.

Not merely stupid was it, however, but inherently false and wicked where all young women had to be nothing but good, and the young men had to be bad not to be bored, and where it was finally all smoothed over and blessed to the tune of wedding bells. For young women like Isabella were married by their fathers and mothers to men who had been young in the fashion of George and Byron. An ignorant, innocent weakling was married to a man who had lived as carnally as he chose, and then the British conscience took out its prayer-book and went to church, saying "Let by-gones be by-gones, boys will be boys, and they were only his wild oats."

Whatever the outcome, George IV and his sort could settle down contentedly to gout and senile bestiality. Not so Byron with his "sincerity and strength." When he married Annabella Milbanke he found his marriage intolerable. Miss E. C. Mayne, in her recent biography, offers once more a certain plausible explanation for the intensity of Byron's distaste for his matrimonial

arrangements. So revolting an explanation should, however, be based upon firmer evidence, especially when the situation explains itself anyhow without it. When Byron found himself married, something seemed to madden him, and Miss Mayne supposes this to have been a love-affair with his half-sister. Is it not more natural to suppose that the trouble was Annabella herself? If we have read Byron's letters, and if we can imagine him married to one of Scott's heroines, incest need not be added to the tortures which both parties to the union must have suffered.

"Miss Edgeworth's novels stepping from their covers,  
Or Mrs. Trimmer's books on education,  
Or 'Cæleb's Wife' set out in quest of lovers,  
Morality's prim personification."

Thus Byron describes the matron, Donna Inez; the maiden Annabella steps from the pages of *Waverley*. In Miss Wardour of *The Antiquary* we saw the young woman of the aristocracy. Her head and the heads of her parents, when they thought of her, were filled with definite moral ideas concerning her. Because she wishes to be good she treats an honorable man like a cad, and it is this rigid devotion to a code of morals, making her merely prim and prudish in youth, but self-righteous, intolerant, and often blind to true morality as she grows older, which is the distinguishing trait of this type of woman. No man was ever less a prig than Scott. When, therefore, he represents as a moral prig a character whom he wishes to be admired, it must be in spite of himself and because he is reflecting staple conventions. No better witness to the tyranny of these conventions could be found.

Anna Isabella Milbanke was the daughter and only child of Sir Ralph Milbanke, a gentleman who had lost money without winning fame in politics, and was now retired to the obscurity of the country. He and his wife were model members of the gentry, exceedingly pious, charitable, comfortable, and as their son-in-law discovered, intensely uninteresting. Their daughter was also a model; she was a young lady with all the characteristics we have noted. She did nothing physically strenuous. She helped the poor. She was religious, and she cultivated her mind with theology, mathematics, and poetry. She was twenty

years old with no experience of the world, but her friends looked upon her as a prodigy of feminine righteousness and intellect. Such were the Milbankes and their lady daughter; such is one side of the picture with morality as its dominant note.

The picture has a sinister side too, however, and we must see both to understand Byron's bitter rage. Annabella, though her father's heir, could not expect a large fortune; politics had been costly. She therefore married Byron with a small dowry, and only the possibility of inheriting wealth from her uncle, Lord Wentworth, Sir Edward Noel. This brother of her mother was an old bachelor with a number of illegitimate children. The Milbankes were uncertain whether he would leave his fortune to his own offspring, or whether he would do what was more proper and leave it respectably to them. He did the latter, and the moral Milbankes found no objection to accepting it and to taking his name for their own. Let us hope that the children of a gentleman and no lady were decently provided for.

But this was not all. In the course of his affair with Caro Lamb, Byron had struck up a firm friendship with Lady Melbourne, the mother of Caro's husband. No person was in better position to know Byron's character than she; few could have known more about his subsequent courses with Lady Oxford and others. Byron's wild oats were not sown in distant and hidden fields. Now Lady Melbourne was also Annabella's aunt, and was on intimate terms with the Milbanke family. She therefore knew what Annabella was as well as what Byron was, and as a well-meaning friend to both, she suggested, promoted, and approved the match between them.

Into the details of Byron's courtship it is not necessary to go, although they reveal the ideals of the society in which he lived. The Duchess of Devonshire, for instance, writes to her son with regard to Annabella: "Lord Byron makes up to her a little; but she don't admire him except as a poet, nor he her except for a wife." In whatever light we look at this situation, it is bad. How could people who so prided themselves upon their moral probity have married their daughter to so immoral a man as Byron? It was impossible that they did not know what he was; not even the stupidity of the Milbankes could have compassed

that. How could Annabella herself ever marry such a man? Ignorance of his past might have been hers, but this makes the situation even blacker for her parents and her aunt who would have had to withhold from this child all knowledge of the character of the man she was to live with. The truth undoubtedly is that they all knew, and trusted Byron to play his part of the game according to the rules just as they played theirs. He was to reform like a gentleman, and settle down with a good grace under the moralizing influence of Annabella.

To such a person, into such a family, under such auspices, Byron married, but he could not continue to play the game according to the rules. It was not that he was unfaithful; that could have been provided for. He was simply disgusted, inexplicably, bitterly disgusted. We must remember that Byron was incapable of inhibiting the expression of his passions; his letters show that. Whatever he felt at the moment of writing, he poured forth like the flood from a broken dam. This is the reason why Arnold and Swinburne speak of his "sincerity," for the man who blazes out what he feels is inevitably sincere. On the other hand, Byron had no practical imagination; he acted from impulse or custom, not from thought. He vowed never to sell Newstead Abbey when in one mood, and in another sold it. He vowed that he would leave Madame Guiccioli unless the clock struck before his trunks were packed; the clock struck and determined that he should stay. Quick and ready to feel and utter, he seldom planned. Now when such a man attempted to live with Annabella Milbanke, what would be the logical result? We must revert again to Isabella Wardour. What would Byron have done if he had been the hero of Scott's *Antiquary*, and had been treated by the heroine as Lovell was? How would he have behaved if he had had to live with a woman whose actions, thoughts, and speech were so rigidly controlled by such rules? The answer is simple enough. "All other souls compared with his are inert," says Taine. Multiply by Byron's dynamic force the disgust which those of us who are young and healthy feel toward one of Scott's heroines, and we shall understand what happened in this unfortunate household. Byron did nothing to extricate himself,—the knot was cut by the child he had married,—but he felt and uttered.



To live happily with his wife, he would have had to belie his past and his nature. He would have had to pretend what he did not feel,—that he had reformed. Concealment he was incapable of, yet conceal he must if he was to live with this prim little person from the country, who had come into his house with a neat and rigid code of morals which he must at least contemplate daily if not obey, morals which none knew better than he were rooted in the immorality of the Uncle Noels, the Caro Lambs, the Melbournes, the Oxfords, and himself. Poor little Annabella, striving in the bravery of ignorance to cage that “splendid and puissant personality” into rules, and rules which he particularly abhorred,—it was an impossible situation. Byron felt what he could not understand, what the others had not thought of, that it was also a fallacious and immoral situation. He felt the truth that, since he and his wife could agree only by a lie, they ought not to have been married, and this feeling he uttered with all his native force, uttered in all his native sincerity,—to his wife. He treated her as he treated everyone who affected him in a similar way, as he treated Southey and George III,—with satire. Positive action he took none, but her presence provoked him to do and say wild things which would horrify and shock that prim provincial prudery. He resented the checks which she implied upon his tremendous self, and therefore he merely behaved more like that self than usual.

This is the explanation of that strange married life of theirs as Miss Mayne describes it,—Byron smashing his watch on the hearthstone, standing over his new-born child’s cradle and exclaiming, “Oh what an implement of torture have I received in thee!” and making Annabella dine alone because he cannot bear to see a woman eat. Imagine treating Isabella Wardour or Rose Bradwardine or Rowena in this fashion. The terrified girl, who was not, however, like her husband, helpless when action was to be taken, could come to but one of two conclusions. First she did indeed call—

“ . . . some druggists and physicians,  
And tried to prove her loving lord was *mad*;  
But as he had some lucid intermissions,  
She next decided he was only *bad*” ;—

and the rest of the story we all know.

In the vitriolic first canto of *Don Juan* Byron has drawn a picture of his hero's mother. It is his portrait of Lady Byron, and may also serve to show the kind of savagery he was capable of uttering. She had that worst error possible,—no female error at all. She was a modern female saint that went like the most regular of clocks. Perfect she was, but insipid as the first twelve hours spent by Adam and Eve before they made things interesting by falling from peace, innocence, and bliss. What a pity that learned virgins should ever wed with persons of no sort of education, or with gentlemen, who though well-born and bred, grow tired of scientific conversation. Then comes the famous—

“But—Oh! ye lords of ladies intellectual,  
Inform us truly, have they not hen-pecked you all?”

And he sums up his own married life in the lines:—

“Don José and the Donna Inez led  
For some time an unhappy sort of life,  
Wishing each other, not divorced, but dead;  
They lived respectably as man and wife,  
Their conduct was exceedingly well-bred.”

But the aristocrat had trapped the man into a false position, and Byron's conduct ceased to be well-bred. Then the British conscience, which had excused his other offences, took vengeance on him for this one. The fruit of the whole experience was *Don Juan*.

The position that each individual holds in society is the result, not merely of his own action, but also of those larger forces which have swept him up out of the dark backward and abysm of time. We have here tried to discuss certain of such forces as they have found expression, not in printed laws, but in the conventions of society, or in what we call the British conscience. By so doing we have seen how these two people, attempting to unite in obedience to the habits of their class, found union impossible. This explains more than Byron's marriage, however; it explains Byron. The process of changing social habits is not easy. The business of deciding what, in the order of civilization, is obsolete and what shall be reformed is fraught with pain and conflict. Ideals become applied to life as laws, rules, conventions; thus applied they produce great, often beneficent

changes. The result is a different society; and what produced good out of the old may in the new state come to produce evil. Food that nourished the child into manhood, the man may need to shun. How to see that the law which we have followed to so good an end must at last be given up for another,—how to apply the ideal in a new way,—that is the great agony that repeats itself forever. Between the upper and nether millstones of such an agony, Byron was caught. The grinding was painful, and like all proud spirits he resented pain which he could not understand. Or to shift the figure altogether, Byron was like a child running down hill. For a time the pitch of the slope accelerates his pace for him, and he flies along with thrilling speed. But the same force begins to make his head move faster than his feet, and finally bowls him over. The child is jolted, bruised, scratched, amazed, frightened, enraged by his fall, by the treachery of this unperceived power which now swept him along in the current of his desires, and now hurled him cruelly to the ground. For a time the social forces of his day swept Byron too in the current of his desires. Then suddenly the same forces tripped his heels and laid him low. It was a painful, galling tumble to a proud spirit, but fortunately that spirit had a voice, and perhaps the cry that Byron raised had some effect upon the force that upset him. At any rate those of us who live in human society will sympathize with his rage.

We might pursue this figure even further, and use it to explain that mockery into which his bitterest rages grow. "And if I laugh at any mortal thing," he says, "'tis that I may not weep." So do we tell our little boy, as he picks himself up from the dirt, to be a man and grin and bear it. And so does the child too learn to choke his tears, mocking pain with laughter.

Mr. Paul Elmer More thinks that sympathy with this mood of mockery, which is the essence of Byron's satire, will grow less. He has more confidence than most men in the imminence of the millenium. Burke conceives of the race as never reaching that static bliss, but as never old, never young, never middle-aged, in a condition of unchangeable constancy, moving on through the varied tenor of decay, fall, renovation, and progression. If this be true, Byron's appeal will not diminish. For those who

would progress are always liable to fall; what they renew is also sure to decay; and decay and fall are pains which like men we must grin and bear. In homelier terms, as long as our grandmothers frown upon the forward ways of us, their grandchildren, and as long as their frowns spoil any of our sport, we shall continue to read Byron with the old gusto.

WILLIAM HALLER.

Barnard College, Columbia University.

## PLATTSBURGH

As many a man with a summer's vacation at his disposal has discovered, it is not every recreation that recreates. Well, it was my lot last summer to find something approaching a real recreation of mind and body and at the same time to learn about a phase of life the importance of which, for good or evil, has recently become obvious to all Americans.

It happens to be the writer's business to cultivate the delicate blossom of literary appreciation in the chill east wind of undergraduate indifference. He stepped from the sleeping-car that dripping August morning as completely ignorant of military matters as a man can well be. For four weeks of hard physical work he looked into no book except drill manuals, and then returned—to his home and sixteenth-century letters—after a recreation which made him feel as though he were really created anew. And he formed definite opinions about the worth of even a small amount of military training.

The present is a time when the good and bad of military training deserves all careful consideration. To many it seems a time when it is necessary to make preparations for war while granting that the possibility of war's occurrence is a horrible thing. Admitting that military training may to some extent make for certain brutalizing tendencies, it seems to me that it makes in a greater degree for the compensating virtues of discipline, manliness, and that comradeship in a high common purpose which grows so slack or so segregated in a society governed by purely economic conditions.

No one to-day can fail to see the dangers of over-exalting the military character. "Compared with these beaked and taloned graspers of the world, saints are herbivorous animals, tame and harmless barnyard poultry." These words—of course they are semi-humorous—are William James's. One wonders whether, if he were alive to-day, his keen vision would not see the best "moral equivalent of war" in the preparation for war for the purpose of its avoidance.

"Plattsburgh, that hot-bed of militarism." My eyes fall on



these words in a newspaper communication. They strike me as curiously unjustified. Militarism, as I understand it, is a state of society in which undue influence is exercised by a recognized military caste, and in which a country's peace is jeopardized by such influence. I saw no evidence whatever of sympathy with such a state of affairs among the members of the camp or the regular officers commanding it. Colonel Roosevelt's speech was listened to with a genial politeness which did not at all express a general approval of his criticism of the administration. Surely his words would have aroused greater enthusiasm in a hot-bed of militarism—and surely that wise judge of audiences would have chosen stronger words in such a hot-bed.

It was a very sensible crowd. The newspaper laudation and ridicule alike failed to make much impression. Even the Ithuriel spear of the *New York Evening Post's* subacid mockery—I believe it described us as feeding on cream and caviare and listening all day to lectures—did not make us wince. We were too busy not to be good-natured. If the members of the camp did not know that “trained officers cannot be made in four weeks” it was not because they were not told, but simply because they had ears to hear and heard not. I sounded many as to what, if any, obligation they felt would be imposed in case of war by attending the camp. Apparently the feeling was general—they didn't want to go to war, but they would. This was the time of the Arabic's sinking.

As time passed, one learned the defects of a purely masculine society. Undiluted masculinity suggests a too exclusively nitrogenous diet. It makes finely for warmth and work, but it sits in time heavily on the fastidious social stomach. The boy is perhaps the finest thing in the world in general, but he is about the poorest thing in the world of larger social intercourse, and man deprived of woman reverts to the small boy—the small boy with a larger and coarser vocabulary. One of the older and more staid members was sitting in front of his tent deploring the too-free use of language into which the men had fallen, when he suddenly struck his hand against something and hurt it. Whereupon he exploded and, like Hamlet, “unpacked his heart with words.” Although not funny to tell, it was very funny to hear.

Indeed there are few sounding-boards which so intensify a jest as the wide and open sky itself. The absence of a roof in the early English theatre must have had an effect upon its humor. When man puts something heavier than canvas over his head his laughter begins to fail.

I recall another incident of one who rose from slumber while his tent-mates were going to bed and dressed, supposing it was morning. This—in the open air—was excruciatingly funny, but I can now see how Meredith might have chosen it as an example of the laughter *not* of the mind. Yet the question remains whether much Homeric and Elizabethan laughter is best provoked by merely "lighting the candelabra of the brain." Surely not all mirth is to be restricted to the frontal lobes. There, it is true, Wit has her seat, but the heart and other organs can laugh as well. This cruel and captious world has room for a laugh like that memorable one of Teufelsdröckh, "a laugh not of the face and diaphragm only but of the whole man from head to heel."

At night upon the march big fires would blaze at the heads of the company streets. Here one evening I fell in talk with a stranger while a group of singers poured forth "My Bonnie lies over the ocean" and "Just a song at twilight" in notes of deep-throated and virile sentimentality. We talked of Christianity and of religion in general. My friend, now an editor in Illinois, had read considerably in books but more in the ways of men. He was an incorrigible Nietzschean. "What men got they got it by fighting." "Christianity was the religion of cowards." "He had given up socialism for anarchy because socialism was getting Christianized and respectable." I stood by my guns—if that warlike figure suits the attitude of tolerant and hopeful activism in which some of us manage to live not altogether ineffectively in spite of the equally scornful orthodox and rational. Of course neither convinced the other. That is not the object of a good talk. But it was satisfactory to hear the other and under side of things so vigorously espoused in our undeniably well-bred community.

"There's a curse in the words—deny it who can!—  
There's a curse in the words: 'I'm a gentleman.'"

And, as with all deep-rooted and perennial institutions, a blessing as well.

On my right as we marched Yale '14 explained to me the folly of Socialism with which I confessed certain weak sympathies. On my left Harvard '14 did the same for Pragmatism toward which I admitted heretical leanings. Number three, rear rank, club-man and fox-hunter, discussed Emily Dickinson, and in this case my fondness was not reproved. With number one, rear rank—newspaper cartoonist at sixteen and now architect somewhere in Ohio—there came a sudden spurt of sympathy on our observing that neither joined in the singing of "John Brown's Body" and "Marching through Georgia." Number one—like "Little Giffen," whom I think he resembled in appearance—was originally "of Tennessee." And while we talked about it, drawn close by the one heritage which a nation that sprang into being only to pass again away, has bequeathed the children of its children, those who so passionately and vainly loved it,—"*qui pro et cum patria jacent*,"—while we talked, I saw going on before us in the early morning sunlight, gold-corded and high-held, the flag which we were following.

When I personally attempt to describe that crowd one word first occurs to me, one word which, however used in its cant or colloquial significance always carries deeper and unescapable connotations—*decent*. A decent lot. They stripped well at the lake's edge when they went in swimming. One felt they would strip well in more transcendental senses.

The last evening at the end of the march, the speeches serious and humorous ended, and the last curt "*Dismissed*" shouted for the last time, the big crowd broke up in the dusk. Walking slowly back alone I came with the rest to a broken-down stone fence. Suddenly out of the dark an unknown young giant with one arm through a companion's, linked his other in my own. "That's the way to get over—together!" and so the three of us went lightly up and over. For a few moments we talked together in that pleasant way in which one was continually slipping with unknown men. It was the frequent note of self-gratulation. "What a fine lot of fellows!" "What a regiment they would make!" Perhaps a captious listener

might have thought it a little absurd. I, at any rate, did not find it so. I called Good Night to my young giant whose face I never saw, with the thrill so common at Plattsburgh, the thrill that came with the sense that this—in spite of all quarrels of Anarchy and Capitalism, of Pacificism and Militarism—that this was young America, a very decent sort of thing, a thing even thrilling to touch shoulders with for a little time, a thing to inspire great hope and confidence in thinking over later.

LOUIS WARDLAW MILES.

Princeton University.

## THE EVOLUTION OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN VIRGINIA

### I. COLONIAL THEORY AND PRACTICE

Three very distinct periods, corresponding to as many different periods in our social and economic development, characterize educational history and growth in the United States. The first is that of the transplanting of European institutions, traditions, and customs to American soil, from the first settlement to the middle of the eighteenth century or a little later, when political, social, and economic conditions in the mother country affected the colonies. The second period is one of attempted modification or adoption in an effort to meet the new demands of a new and radically different environment, and extends from about the middle of the eighteenth century to about the fourth decade of the nineteenth century. The third is the period of the building up here of a system of education, distinctively American, which should meet the new conditions into which the nation had come, and extends from the thirties to near the close of the nineteenth century. A brief description of each will make somewhat clearer these periods or divisions in our educational history.

Generally speaking, the first period of our educational growth is marked by a purely religious conception. Educational conditions in Europe at the time America was settled and during the period of colonial government are a necessary background for any adequate understanding of educational custom and practice here during the first period. Most of the settlements in this country were made when the reformation movement was at a most crucial point, and when the religious element was most prominent in educational matters. Educational questions were receiving more attention in Europe than they had ever received; education and schooling were given a peculiar emphasis and importance by the reformation condition. In the American colonies, therefore, education became intimately connected with religion and the church. It was controlled by the church in Pennsylvania and New York; elementary education for the more prosperous classes was carried on by the private tutorial system



in Virginia and the southern colonies, and for the lower classes by the apprenticeship and poor laws, which, though not naming schools as distinct institutions, yet involved the education of the less fortunate people; and there was a certain governmental activity in educational matters in Massachusetts and New England which showed a Puritan adaptation of some of the English laws and customs.

In the second period educational theory and practice are the result of effort at adjustment to new conditions. Extending from about 1750, or somewhat later, to the period of Jacksonian democracy, this period in our educational growth is marked by a certain mixture of aristocratic ideals and increasing democratic notions. It is a period of rapid economic growth and development. As early as 1763, at the close of the Seven Years' War, fear of French hostilities had been removed from the English colonists, who were then left free to devote their efforts unrestricted to material expansion. From this time forward they were eager to expand; and after the Revolution, when all colonial restrictions were removed, an unprecedented stimulus was given to economic and industrial development. Along with this struggle for commercial and economic independence went also another change, more specifically educational, which concerns us here. It was during this time that elementary schools of a private or quasi-private character, church and town schools began to disappear and the so-called "district school," which is distinctively an American product, began to assume their place.

The third period extends from the thirties to near the end of the nineteenth century. It is characterized by the gradual separation of public education from ecclesiastical control; by the gradual development of the ideal of local control; and by what is probably even more noticeable, a gradual but sure growth toward the ideal of democracy. During this time public schools passed over to the state, and there appeared a tendency, which has gradually increased, toward state control; the old academies rapidly changed into public high schools, colleges became largely non-sectarian, and state universities were organized and developed. It is during this period, also, that we find a more general expansion in state constitutional provisions

for education than previously existed, which was one result of the development of the democratic theory of government. Specific and definite language was substituted for general educational terms in the constitutions. There was also an extension of the franchise and an increase in the number of elective officers. Faith in the power of the people was developing. It was during this general period that we find the establishment of the first normal school, the creation of the first state board of education and the office of the first superintendent of public instruction, the maintenance of the first teachers' institutes, and the establishment of the first school libraries. Everywhere there was a new impetus to educational thought and practice.

Just as our modern public school system, which has grown from development in the second and third periods, cannot be adequately understood except in the light of our colonial conditions, so also must colonial custom and practice be explained in view of European antecedents. This is true of educational conditions in all the English colonies, and particularly so in Virginia, whose general mental attitude toward education in colonial days was much like that of the mother country. The English spirit in the educational legislation of that country is everywhere pronounced. The dominating influences were here, as in England, especially aristocratic, and there was a noticeable tardiness and indifference to so-called popular education. In actual practice we find the tutor or the small school, or, as in not a few cases, education in England, the rule for the well-to-do; and the lower classes were cared for educationally only through poor relief and apprenticeship laws after the manner of the mother country. Most of the legislation on the subject of education in Virginia, for example, even as late as the beginning of the national period, had to do with William and Mary College or with the care of poor orphans and children whose parents were unable to bring them up in "proper courses." It is the legislation dealing with the latter class which is pertinent to the present subject.

This legislation in the colony of Virginia not only had its foundations in similar legislation in England, but in many cases it was an almost direct taking over, certainly an adaptation, of

the principles found in the famous series of poor relief and apprenticeship enactments which developed in England during the second half of the sixteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Legislation of this kind seemed necessary in order to take care of the gradually increasing dependent class, a group made up of journeymen, apprentices, vagrants, "thieves and sturdy beggars," whose wages, employment, or migration was in almost every case determined by some one of the upper classes of English population. Caring for this dependent element was an immense task. The suppression of English monasteries by Henry VIII and Edward VI on the alleged ground of negligence and certain forms of irreligion and immorality, destroyed many facilities and important agencies for poor relief and elementary education.<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth undertook to make amends for these acts of destruction to monasteries and guilds, by a series of famous poor relief and apprenticeship laws which culminated in the oft-cited law of 1601,<sup>3</sup> which remained in force in England until the early part of the nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup> The execution and enforcement of these acts, however, were put into the hands of local justices of the peace, who were country gentlemen. It should perhaps be noted at this point that many of the early colonists were of this class and were trained in the interpretation and administration of these laws. Evidence of this can be found in Virginia and in the New England colonies.

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<sup>1</sup>"Be it therefore enacted by the authoritie of this Grand Assembly, according to the aforesayd laudable custom in the Kingdom of England . . . ." is now and then a part of the preamble to some of the early Virginia acts.

<sup>2</sup>Leach, *English Schools at the Reformation*. It is said that as many as 1,000 foundations were destroyed,—about ten million dollars in the present valuation. By the law of 1536 (27 Henry VIII, c. 28) all monasteries were to be "given to the King, which have not lands above 200*£* by the year." By the law of 1546 (37 Henry VIII, c. 4) "all colleges, chantries, free chapels, etc., shall be in the King's Majesty's disposition." By the law of 1547 (1 Edward VI, c. 14) the statute of 37 Henry VIII was somewhat revised and reënacted. (See *English Statutes at Large*, Vols. 4 and 5.)

<sup>3</sup>43 Elizabeth, c. 2; *Statutes at Large*, Vol. 7, pp. 30-37. This is the real statutory foundation of the poor law system.

<sup>4</sup>An illuminating discussion of the English system of poor and apprenticeship laws may be had in Sir George Nicholls, *A History of the English Poor Law*.

By this law of 1601 the church wardens of every parish, and two, three, or four "substantial householders there," depending on the size of the parish, were to be nominated annually, at Easter or one month thereafter, by the justice of the peace, to be called "overseers of the poor." These officers were to give attention to "setting to work the children of all such whose parents shall not . . . . be thought able to maintain their children, . . . . and also to raise weekly or otherwise (by taxation of every inhabitant, parson, vicar, and other, and of every occupier of lands, houses, tithes impropriate, appropriations of tithes, coal mines, or saleable underwoods in the said parish, in such competent sum or sums of money as they shall see fit) a convenient stock of flax, hemp, wool, thread, iron and other necessary ware and stuff, to set the poor to work: and also competent sums of money for . . . . putting out of such children to be apprentices, to be gathered out of the same parish, according to the ability of the same parish. . . ."

These overseers were to meet monthly on Sunday afternoon, "after divine service," "to consider some good course to be taken." They were to give a true and perfect account of all moneys received by them, or of all stock, and of "all the things concerning their said office." A penalty of twenty shillings was prescribed for every case of negligence or default on the part of the overseers, and imprisonment was prescribed for the overseers who refused "to account." Whenever the justices of the peace found that the inhabitants of any parish were unable to relieve their poor, the justices were to "tax, rate, and assess as aforesaid," any other parishes in "the hundred where the said parish is." In case the hundred was not regarded as able to bear the tax, the justices at their quarter sessions were to rate and assess other parishes "within the said county" for the purpose of the law. Those persons who refused to pay their assessment saw their property sold for the rate.

Other duties of the church wardens and overseers of the poor were to bind as apprentices the children affected by this act, the males until they were twenty-four years of age, and the females until they were twenty-one or until the time of their marriage; and to have houses built on "any waste or common" in the

parish at the "general charges of the parish" as habitations for the poor. Powers similar to those given to justices of the peace were given to officers of towns and corporations. Justices in the county and officers in the towns, who failed regularly to nominate the overseers of the poor "shall lose and forfeit for every such default five pounds. . . ."

One of the first pieces of Virginia colonial legislation which has a public educational<sup>5</sup> aspect was passed in March, 1643:<sup>6</sup>

"And all overseers and guardians of such orphans are enjoyned by the authoritie aforesaid [county courts] to educate and instruct them according to their best endeavors in Christian religion and in rudiments of learning and to provide for them necessaries according to the competence of their estates. . . ."

Three years later we find further legislation which has a very vital educational significance. It shows, too, how, in spite of a difference in local conditions, legislation and custom in the mother country were transplanted in the colony. Note the following act, passed in October, 1646:<sup>7</sup>

"Whereas sundry laws and statutes by act of parliament established, have with great wisdom ordained, for the better educating of youth in honest and profitable trades and manufactures, as also to avoyd sloath and idlenesse wherewith such young children are easily corrupted, as also for reliefe of such parents whose poverty extends not to give them breeding, That the justices of the peace should at their discretion, bind out children to tradesmen or husbandmen to be brought up in some good and lawfull calling, and whereas God Almighty, among many his other blessings, hath vouchsafed increase of children to this colony, who now are multiplied to a considerable number, who if instructed in good and lawfull trades would very much improve the honor and reputation of the country, and noe less their own good and their parents comfort: But forasmuch as for the most part the parents, either through fond indulgence or perverse ob-

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<sup>5</sup>A fairly creditable compilation of Virginia laws on education during colonial days is found in Clews, *Educational Legislation and Administration of Colonial Government*. New York, 1899.

<sup>6</sup>18 Charles I, Hening, *Statutes*, Vol. 1, p. 261.

<sup>7</sup>21 Charles I, Hening, *Statutes*, Vol. 1, pp. 336-337.



stinacy, are most adverse, and unwilling to parte with their children, Be it therefore inacted by the authoritie of this Grand Assembly, according to the aforesayd laudable custom in the Kingdom of England, that the commissioners of the several counties respectively do, at their discretion, make choice of two children in each county of the age of eight or seaven years at the least, either male or female, which are to be sent up to James City between this and June next to be employed in public flax houses under such master and mistresse as shall be there appointed, in carding, knitting, and spinning, &c., and that the said children be furnished from the said county with sixe barrells of corne, two coverletts, or one rugg and one blanket: one bed, one wooden bowle, or tray, two pewter spoones, one sow shote of six months old, two laying hens, with convenient apparell both linen and woollen, with hose and shoes. . . ."

As provision for housing these children it was ordered that two houses be erected, and the governor and assembly agreed "for the sume of 10000 lb. of tob'o . . . to build and finish the said houses in manner and form before expressed." The act required the commissioners to be cautious so as "not to take up any children but from such parents who by reason of their poverty are disabled to maintaine and educate them."

This seems to be about the first legislation in the colony on the subject of the poor. How extensively or effectively the law was executed there the documents and material accessible do not indicate. But this remained the law dealing with the general control of the poor population for a little more than a quarter of a century. The next important enactment on the subject was in September, 1672.

In that year, the justices of the peace were ordered<sup>8</sup> to "put the lawes of England against vagrant, idle, and desolute persons in strict execution, and the respective county courts shall, and hereby are empowered and authorized to place out all children, whose parents are not able to bring them up, apprentices to tradesmen, the males till one and twenty years of age, and the females to other necessary imployments, till eighteene years of age, and noe longer, and the churchwardens of every parish shall

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<sup>8</sup> 24 Charles II, Hening, *Statutes*, Vol. 2, p. 298.

be strictly enjoined by the courts to give them an account annually at their orphans court of all such children within their parish as they judge to be within the said capacity."

By this act the churchwardens were entrusted with the important work in the various communities, and they retained this as a part of their duties and powers for more than a hundred years. Beginning with 1780,<sup>9</sup> however, the power of providing for the poor was gradually transferred, first in a few counties and later in others,<sup>10</sup> from the vestries to five freeholders resident in each county, elected to serve three years. These officers became known as "overseers of the poor."

The law dealing with poor children and providing for their bringing up was gradually elaborated. By act of October, 1705,<sup>11</sup> it was ordered that when the estate of any orphan was so small "that no person will maintain him for the profits thereof, then such orphan shall be bound apprentice to some handicraft trade, or mariner, until he shall attain to the age of one and twenty. And the master of each such orphan shall be obliged to teach him to read and write: and at the expiration of his servitude, to pay and allow him in like manner as is appointed for servants, by indenture or custom."

In this and subsequent legislation the relation between the poor and apprenticeship laws and formal education begins to reveal itself. The slow but sure evolution of a literary education is seen in this state all the way through the enactments of legislation providing homes and training for some occupation for poor orphans and children whose parents were unable to give them a "bringing up in proper courses," down to the passage of the significant law of 1796, described below, the creation of the famous literary fund in 1810, and subsequent educational acts. The law of October, 1705, is especially significant in its use of the phrase "obliged to teach him [apprenticed orphan or other poor child] to read and write." Merely to teach such an orphan or poor child a trade or art is from this time not regarded

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<sup>9</sup> Hening, *Statutes*, Vol. 10, Chapter 22.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 11, Chapter 36.

<sup>11</sup> 4 Anne, Hening, *Statutes*, Vol. 3, p. 375.

as the only duty the master owes his apprentice; mere maintenance by the master is not regarded as sufficient; but there must be some consideration of formal instruction, however meager such instruction might be. A growing consciousness on the subject is apparent.

In February, 1727,<sup>12</sup> it became lawful for the parish churchwardens, upon certificate from the court, to bind out and put into service as apprentices the child or children of parents who were incapable of taking "due care" of the education and instruction in Christian principles of such child or children. Such a child or children were to be apprenticed for such a term, "and under such covenants, as hath been usual and customary, or [as] the law directs in the case of the orphan children." The paternalistic character of apprenticeship legislation which formerly seems to have applied especially to poor orphans is now evident in laws dealing with the children of poor parents; and there is evidence of a growing tendency to regard such children as belonging to the church or to the state and of being entitled, by reason of such relationship, to such training and instruction as would enable them to maintain themselves on reaching maturity.

By act of August, 1736,<sup>13</sup> all apprentices were compelled to serve out their binding because "the taking of apprentices, and bringing them up, and instructing them to be skilful in the trades, arts, misteries, or occupations, to which they are bound, will be very beneficial to such apprentices, and increase the number of artificers in the colony. . . ."

The following enactment near the middle of the eighteenth century,<sup>14</sup> is of considerable educational importance. Whenever the profits of an orphan's estate were insufficient to maintain him, such orphan was to be bound apprentice, "every male to some tradesman, merchant, mariner, or other person approved by the court, until he shall attain the age of one and twenty years, and every female to some suitable trade or employment, 'till her age of eighteen years; and the master or mistress of every

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<sup>12</sup> 1 George II, Hening, *Statutes*, Vol. 4, p. 212.

<sup>13</sup> 10 George II, Hening, *Statutes*, Vol. 4, p. 482.

<sup>14</sup> October, 1748. 22 George II, Hening, *Statutes*, Vol. 5, pp. 449 ff.

servant, shall find and provide for him or her, diet, clothes, lodgings, and accommodations fit and necessary, and shall teach, or cause him or her to be taught to read and write, and at the expiration of his or her apprenticeship, shall pay every such servant, the like allowance as is by law appointed for servants by indenture or custom. . . ."

In the same year, 1748, an act dealing with the poor and apprenticeship system was passed<sup>15</sup> which has further educational significance. This law was intended to prevent the "evil consequences attending the neglect or inability of poor people to bring up their children in an honest or orderly course of life." Persons adjudged by the court as incapable of supporting and bringing up their children in "honest courses," or, wherever the education and instruction of such children in the principles of Christian religion were neglected by their parents, the churchwardens were given further power of binding out such children as apprentices, "under such covenants and conditions as the law directs for poor orphan children." The passage of this law implies that there had been neglect at a very vital point in the matter of better controlling the conditions of the poor population of the colony. The law was to go into effect June 10, 1751. By the same act churchwardens of a parish to which poor persons belonged were compelled to receive and provide for such poor on penalty of forfeiting twenty pounds current money. This provision is very significant in the light of a subsequent law, passed May, 1780, described below, in which it was stated that great inconveniences had arisen "from the mode prescribed for making provision for the poor and other duties of the vestries."<sup>16</sup>

The duties and responsibilities of the churchwardens and parish vestries in the matter of providing for the poor also gradually increased. By act of May, 1755,<sup>17</sup> the churchwardens were required to keep a register of all the poor in their parish, and were given power to send certain of the poor to "poor houses." By this same act the poor or unfortunate were required to wear

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<sup>15</sup> 22 George II, Hening, *Statutes*, Vol. 6, p. 32.

<sup>16</sup> Hening, *Statutes*, Vol. 10.

<sup>17</sup> 22 George II, Hening, *Statutes*, Vol. 6, p. 475.

a badge upon the shoulder of their right sleeve "of his or her uppermost garment, in an open and visible manner." In the same act the vestries were given the power to build poor houses where the poor were to be sent and worked in "cotton, hemp and flax or other necessary materials, implements or things, for setting the said poor to work," to help maintain themselves. Moreover, an allowance was to be levied in the regular parish levies "for the education of such poor children as shall be placed in the said house or houses, until they shall be bound out according to law." This is another example of the direct transplanting to the colony of an English custom. The similarity between this law and the law of 1601, described above, is at once noticeable.<sup>18</sup>

By an act of November, 1769,<sup>19</sup> children born out of lawful matrimony were, like other unfortunate children, to be bound apprentices by the churchwardens of the parish, males until they were twenty-one years of age, and females until they were eighteen, "and the master or mistress . . . shall teach, or cause him or her to be taught to read and write."

Between 1769 and 1778 there is little or no legislation of an important nature dealing with the subject of the poor and apprentices. The danger through which the colony was at this time passing along with the other English colonies in America, and the final break with the mother country, may, in the main, account for noticeably sparse enactments providing for the poor. But poor and apprenticeship legislation had been built up and elaborated sufficiently in detail to take care of that dependent class to which the colony had actively given attention. By the general law on the subject all poor orphans, children of poor parents, and illegitimate children were alike entitled to be bound by legally authorized local bodies to a master or mistress, to serve for a term of years, during which time they were to be maintained, trained in an art, industry or trade, and taught to read and write. When the term of service was ended, the

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<sup>18</sup> 43 Elizabeth, Chapter 2. (See Monroe, *Cyclopedia of Education*, Vol. 5, Article, "Poor Laws and Education.")

<sup>19</sup> 10 George III, Henning *Statutes*, Vol. 8, p. 376.



apprentice usually found a career open to him for which he had been trained. However great are the obvious weaknesses of such a system, its value in a time such as the eighteenth century and in a colony like Virginia cannot be questioned. It is unfortunate that materials and documents are not more readily accessible by which a fair and reliable notion of the actual operation of these laws could be gained. It is even more unfortunate that the colony did not inherit from the mother country a better educational tradition and custom.

The conception of educational control seems to change somewhat earlier than one would expect. In October, 1778, "for want of a vestry in the parish of Botetourt, in the county of Botetourt, the poor . . . are likely to suffer for want of proper support and maintenance," the commissioners of the county were empowered to levy a tax to take care of the poor.<sup>21</sup> The educational significance of this law will later appear; it seems to be the beginning of an actual transfer of powers and duties of dealing with the poor, from churchwardens, vestries, or other church authorities to state or county authorities. But this transfer gradually occurs and from it grows the idea, which soon expresses itself, that caring for and "educating" the poor is a state rather than an ecclesiastical function. Two years later, in 1780, it was noticed that previous provisions for taking care of the poor were inadequate, and the following law was intended as a remedy:<sup>22</sup>

"Whereas great inconveniences have arisen from the mode prescribed for making provision for the poor and other duties of the vestries" [in the counties of Rockbridge, Botetourt, Montgomery, Washington, Greenbrier, Augusta, and Frederick], "Be it enacted by the general assembly, That where any of the above enumerated counties have vestries, or other bodies vested with powers to provide for the poor, the same are hereby dissolved. And for providing for the poor, and such other parochial duties as have hitherto been exercised by the vestries, churchwardens or other bodies of the respective parishes, Be it enacted" [that five freeholders resident in each county be elected overseers of the poor, to serve for three years].

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<sup>21</sup> Hening, *Statutes*, Vol. 9, p. 527.

<sup>22</sup> Laws of May, 1780, Chapter 22. Hening, *Statutes*, Vol. 10.

By this law, these men were to be a body politic and corporate and succeed to the powers and duties of the vestries and churchwardens. Two years later, by act of May, 1782,<sup>23</sup> this same provision for the poor was extended to the counties of Shenandoah, Henry, Monongalia, Ohio, and Berkeley, which appeared to be "subject to the same inconveniences experienced in aforesaid counties before the said act" was passed: For remedy whereof, Be it enacted, That. . . . " [any vestries or other bodies which were vested with powers to make provision for the poor, be dissolved].

Like many laws of a general character of this time, the above enactments failed somewhat of their purpose, and in October, 1784,<sup>24</sup> it became necessary to pass an additional act on the subject, or to amend previous legislation dealing with provision for the poor. It was represented "that in many counties in the commonwealth the sheriffs have neglected to hold elections of overseers of the poor at the time directed by the act for dissolving several vestries, . . . and it is doubtful whether such elections can be made at any other time within three years, . . . Be it enacted, That the sheriffs . . . shall proceed to elect overseers of the poor in like manner as is directed in the said recited act."

Frequent and repeated legislation on the subject of the poor indicated earnestness in making adequate provision for this neglected and unfortunate class. In October, 1785,<sup>25</sup> another poor law was passed by which the various counties were to be districted, "three discreet, fit, and proper persons" were to be elected overseers of the poor, to serve for three years, and to meet at stated times "to levy and assess upon the tithables . . . competent sums of money, or tobacco in lieu thereof at a stated price, to be paid at the option of the party chargeable therewith, for the necessary relief and support of all such poor . . . as are not able to maintain themselves." The overseers were, in the same manner as described in previous laws on the subject, to make monthly returns of the poor orphans to the various

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<sup>23</sup> Laws of May, 1782, Chapter 36. Hening, *Statutes*, Vol. 11.

<sup>24</sup> Of May, 1780.

<sup>25</sup> Laws of October, 1784, Chapter 6. Hening, *Statutes*, Vol. 11.

<sup>26</sup> Laws of October, 1785, Chapter 4. Hening, *Statutes*, Vol. 12.

county courts. These poor orphans were to be bound out apprentices by the overseers, on the authority and by the direction of the courts. By this same act all powers and authority given to churchwardens, by a previous act,<sup>27</sup> in regard to the binding of illegitimate children apprentices, were now transferred to the overseers of the poor, "who shall perform the same duties as by that act are required to be performed by a churchwarden"; and these overseers of the poor were to have the same powers and were required to perform the same duties which had formerly been prescribed for the various vestries, under the direction and by the authority of the various county courts.

Legislation providing for the relief of the poor, which indeed would by this time appear to be sufficient for conditions as they existed in Virginia, were yet inadequate. In October, 1786, former legislation on the subject was revised and amended so as more nearly to meet the needs of the poor of the state. It was pointed out that in not a few communities no overseers of the poor had been elected, and this unfortunate class was suffering as a consequence. In revising and amending legislation that existed at the time, practically all provisions of the legislation were reviewed: the manner of electing the overseers, of filling vacancies, of making levies and assessments, and of the various duties of the overseers.<sup>28</sup>

It is in this amended act that a provision of more particular educational interest appears:—

"Be it further enacted, that the overseers of the poor in each district, shall monthly make returns to the court of their county, of the orphans in their district, and of such children within the same, whose parents they shall judge incapable of supporting and bringing them up in honest courses. And the said court is hereby authorized to direct the said overseers, or either of them, to bind out such poor orphans and children apprentices to such person or persons as the court shall approve of, until the age of twenty-one years, if a boy, or eighteen years, if a girl. The indentures of such apprentices shall contain proper covenants to oblige the person to whom they shall be bound, to teach them some art, trade,

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<sup>27</sup> Act of November, 1769. 10 George III, Hening, *Statutes*, Vol. 8.

<sup>28</sup> Laws of October, 1786. Hening, *Statutes*, Vol. 12.

or business, to be particularized in the indentures, as also reading and writing, and, if a boy, common arithmetic, including the rule to three, and to pay to him or her, as the case may be, three pounds and ten shillings at the expiration of the time of service."

In less than a year further legislation seemed necessary to provide for poor orphans and children whose parents were unable to "bring them up in honest courses." A weakness characteristic of much of the legislation of the time appears: the difficulty was not so much in passing but in executing laws. The following law of December 31, 1787,<sup>29</sup> is very suggestive:—

"Whereas the laws heretofore made for providing for the poor have in some instances proved difficult and burthensome in their execution, and in others inadequate to the purpose; For remedy thereof, Be it enacted by the general assembly. . . ."

The act continues and provides for limiting the districts for electing overseers of the poor; again defines the detailed duties of the overseers; names the time of their meetings; prescribes the manner of collecting the "poor rates" by the collectors and their deputies; allows a fee of six shillings to each overseer for every day he attends the annual meetings of the overseers; and names the same amount as a penalty for non-attendance. By the same act the corporation courts of the several corporate towns in the state were empowered and required to provide for and maintain the poor within their own limits "separately and distinctly from the poor of the county."

Few, if any, important changes appear in poor apprenticeship legislation from 1787 to 1791. On December 15<sup>30</sup> of that year the laws on these subjects were so amended as to provide remedies against any overseer of the poor who withheld any poor rates which had come into his hands, and by the same law all poor rates were to be levied in specie.

The following year another slight change was made in the laws. By act of December 11, 1792, poor orphans and children whose parents were incapable of properly providing for them were to be

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<sup>29</sup> Hening, *Statutes*, Vol. 12, pp. 573 ff.

<sup>30</sup> Hening, *Statutes*, Vol. 13, p. 262.

bound as before "to some master or mistress, who shall covenant to teach the apprentice some art, trade, or business, to be particularized in the indenture, as also reading and writing, and if a boy, common arithmetic, including the rule to three, and to pay him or her twelve dollars at the expiration of the time."<sup>31</sup> The law of December 26, 1792, "an act providing for the poor and declaring who shall be deemed vagrants," was something of a summary of previous laws on the subject of the poor and apprenticeship. By this law children born out of lawful marriage continued subject to the same law of binding out and apprenticing as orphans and poor children.

From the foregoing description of the gradual growth of laws on the subject of the poor and apprenticeship custom, which contain practically everything that even remotely suggests a system of formal intellectual training, it may be seen that there is nothing in this legislation of Virginia which shows even the genesis of a free public school system. And this is not unexpected. The more prosperous settlers of Virginia early accustomed themselves to the habit of tutorial instruction for their children or of having them educated in Europe; and the less fortunate part of the population was left uncared for educationally, except in the manner described in the preceding pages. This remained the condition for several years after the organization of the state in 1776. The constitution,<sup>32</sup> adopted June 29 of that year, was silent on the subject of schools, and remained silent until 1851; though Thomas Jefferson early conceived a system of education for all the people of the state, and, it is said, favored the emancipation and education of the negro.<sup>33</sup> As early as 1779 he had mapped out a bill which provided for giving free elementary instruction to all the free children of the state, in reading, writing, and arithmetic. In spite of its excellence, however, this plan was not well received and it was therefore naturally defeated.

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<sup>31</sup> Statutes at large, 1792, Chap. 33.

<sup>32</sup> This constitution was not submitted to the people for ratification.

<sup>33</sup> See Jefferson's *Notes on Virginia*; *Rept. Com. Edu.*, 1895-1896, Vol. 1, p. 269; *Ibid.*, 1899-1900, Vol. 1, p. 431; Adams, *Thomas Jefferson and the University of Virginia*; Circular of Information, 1, 1888, U. S. Bureau of Education.



To understand and appreciate the popular mental attitude, reflected in the poor law policy, to the class of dependants intrusted to its care, it is necessary to consider that education is a term which has had and which yet has a very varying meaning to different persons at different times. The term now generally means an expansion of the mental faculties through a specific organized course of a more or less literary nature. For the more prosperous part of society a "certain tincture of letters" has, in the popular mind, always been regarded absolutely necessary; but for generations and generations this particular form of education has not been held in high esteem for the poorer classes of society. Not a few sporadic, voluntary efforts of a certain limited character were made in Virginia to put education, as we now generally understand the term, in more or less easy reach of those of the poorer classes who would acquire it.<sup>34</sup> Yet, the general view was that formal literary education was not essentially requisite to the poor youth of the community, whose parents or guardians appeared indeed more concerned about a practical training of their children or wards in the occupations and crafts through which they were later to maintain themselves, than they were interested in "book-learning."

This seems unquestionably the attitude of public conscience in colonial Virginia,—an attitude which was inherited from English tradition and custom, and which persisted far into the nineteenth century.<sup>35</sup> And that its general effect was harmful is hardly now a question: only very perfunctory, mechanical, and indifferent efforts appear to have been made to provide educational facilities for that large class of poor and otherwise unfortunate youth in the colony, who became almost entirely dependent upon the poor law and apprenticeship system. This

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<sup>34</sup> 18 Charles II, Hening, *Statutes*, 1, p. 252; 13 Charles II, Hening, 2, p. 25; 13 Charles II, Hening, 2, p. 37; 14 Charles II, Hening, 2, p. 56; 13 Charles II, Act XXXV; 5 William and Mary, Hening, 3, p. 123; 4 Anne, Hening, 3, p. 35; Hening, 4, p. 306; Hening, 7, pp. 317-320; William and Mary Quarterly, 6, pp. 72-73; Elizabeth County Records, 1693; Bruce, *Institutional History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century*, 1, part 2.

<sup>35</sup> *Rept. Com. Edu.*, 1899-1900, Vol. 1, p. 434; *Proc. Peabody Board Trustees*, Vol. 2, p. 42. (See also message of Governor Johnson in 1853, in public documents for that year.)

adoption of the current attitude and practice of England not only resulted in a noticeable neglect of formal education of the less prosperous class of youth; but the influence of the system on parents who could, under it, easily discharge their responsibility in interesting themselves in a training of their youth which would guarantee them a hopeful start in life, was naturally harmful and vicious.

Inadequate classification of the poor and dependent, the harmful effect of the system of public maintenance, which could never be anything like an adequate substitution for even the rudest home, and the general baneful influence on a class which really needed stimulation to effort, are some of the obvious serious weaknesses of such a system as operated in Virginia for nearly two centuries. Public opinion on the subject of education shows a rapidly maturing tendency, however, in the nineteenth century. It is seen in the theory, which begins to find some practical expression in legislation, that the fundamentals of a literary education are immensely more important to the individual units of a successfully organized community, and so to the community itself, than mere economic competency of those units. From this gradually developing public belief, of which our system of free and compulsory elementary education are fruits, the influence of social evolution on educational theory and practice begins to reveal itself. The earliest example of this practical legislation, which is of such vast importance in the educational history of Virginia, is the law of February 2, 1810, creating the Literary Fund, which came to play such an important part in furnishing educational facilities to the youth of the State.

EDGAR W. KNIGHT.

Trinity College, N. C.

## THE NEGRO IN THE SOUTHERN SHORT STORY

Oroonoko, says the divine Aphra, "was pretty tall, but of a Shape the most exact that can be fancy'd: The most famous Statuary could not form the Figure of a Man more admirably turn'd from Head to Foot. His Face was . . . a perfect Ebony, or polished Jet. His Eyes were the most awful that could be seen, and very piercing; the White of 'em being like Snow, as were his Teeth. His Nose was rising and Roman, . . . his Mouth the finest shaped that could be seen. . . . The whole Proportion and Air of his Face was so nobly and exactly formed, that bating his Colour, there could be nothing in Nature more beautiful, agreeable and handsome." Perhaps to quell the "insinuations about town" that her now discredited biographer mentions, she lavishes equal praise upon the loveliness of Imoinda (for "most certainly there are Beauties that can charm of that Colour"),—her facial charms at which Oroonoko "was infinitely surpriz'd," her "lovely Modesty," "the softness in her Look and Sighs," and "the Awefulness wherewith she receiv'd him." Not so does Othello describe his black face! But then Mrs. Behn was telling a true story, so that the accuracy of her description cannot be challenged!

Nobody, I suppose, believes that Mrs. Behn knew the negro race well. And likewise when Thackeray wrote in *Vanity Fair* of the mulatto, Rhoda Swartz's, presentation at court, her social triumphs in London society, and her subsequent marriage to a lord of Scotland; when Thackeray's Jumbo accompanied Henry Warrington to England and married an Englishwoman; when Miss Alcott calmly told in "Work" how a Boston family adopted a negro girl who later married their son; when Mrs. Stowe depicted the unspeakable hardships of a saintly Uncle Tom;—the negro was dealt with by writers as ignorant of his real character as they were lacking in a sense of the fitness of things. That Southern writers should understand the negro better than any outsider can is only natural, and it is in their work that one looks for a fair picture of him. Southern short-story writers have been particularly fond of negro characters, and if they have described

no houris like Imoinda or Prince Charmings like Oroonoko, they have also avoided the abnormal and unjust pictures that have, at various times, disfigured American novels. The delicate, half sentimental affection with which Mr. Page and Harris have written of the old slave is now matched by the thorough appreciation and exquisite sympathy in Mrs. Stuart's stories of the modern freedman; and the attitude of these three writers seems to be that of the South at large.

Most of this work has been done in comparatively recent years. In ante-bellum days the negro was too commonplace a chattel to attract the attention of a Southern writer, and war came too quickly to allow any delineation of an Uncle Tom from a Southern viewpoint. The picturesqueness, the pathos of the slave was obvious only to non-slaveholders. John Pendleton Kennedy showed an instinctive knowledge of this in his *Swallow Barn* (1832), "a series of detached sketches linked together by the hooks and eyes of a traveller's notes." His narrative takes the form of letters written by a Northern man, Mark Littleton, who is visiting friends and relatives in Virginia, and "exhibits a picture of country life in Virginia as it existed in the early part of the nineteenth century." In *Swallow Barn*, as was to be expected, Littleton often mentioned the slaves, and here the negro makes his bow to the short story. Kennedy, however, had no more than a superficial insight into the character of the negro, and so the sketches he gives are neither realistic nor lasting, although one of them, in "A Negro Mother," is very pathetic.

The most noticeable fact in connection with Kennedy's negroes is that (like Mrs. Stowe's) they customarily use good English. Old Uncle Carey, for instance, will say: "God bless you, master Harvey, and young masters all" in true Shakespearean fashion. That Kennedy himself felt the incongruity of such language is evinced, in a later edition, by his remark in describing a musical performance of Uncle Carey's: "It will not do to give his words, which, without the aid of all the accessories, the figure of the old man himself, and the rapid twang of his banjo, and especially the little affectations of his professorial vanity, would convey but a bald impression of the serio-comic

effect the whole exhibition had upon us." Here was a chance missed for introducing negro dialect, but doubtless Kennedy did not appreciate its real worth, while he felt unequal to writing it. Necessarily his negro characters lack convincingness.

A second and an enlarged edition of *Swallow Barn* was issued in 1851. By that time Poe had produced his matchless short stories, but he did not attempt, even in Kennedy's bald fashion, to portray the negro. Jupiter, a subsidiary character in "The Gold Bug" (1843), is the only negro in Poe's work,—if one excepts the casually mentioned Pompey, the body-servant of Miss Psyche Zenobia in the burlesque "Predicament,"—and he is abominably handled. Unfortunately, Poe made an effort at dialect, with the result that Jupiter speaks a jargon whose like has never been heard before or since, a jargon that may have convinced Poe of his inability to portray the negro. Or, addicted as he was to *l'art pour l'art* shibboleth, he may have doubted the negro's fitness as a subject for literature. It is not surprising that Poe wrote no further of Jupiters and Pompeys. No literary artist has more completely disregarded his native local color (if the expression may be used) than he: rarely did he describe character or scenes with which he was familiar. Poe's intellect was of a sort that detached him from his environments. He had little in common with his associates, his literary tastes craved more remote regions and more poetic periods than those in which he lived; his characters, his plots, his style were of by-gone days. In the one story in which he attempts to give a local Virginia setting, he fixes one's attention on the dream-plot, the scene of which is laid in India, and the story, "A Tale of the Ragged Mountains," cannot be said to have local color at all. Nor does he succeed much better in describing a Charleston *milieu* in "The Gold Bug." Poe was suited temperamentally for writing of the fairy domain of an æsthetic multi-millionaire, a suite of voluptuous Venetian apartments, a yawning maelstrom, or the planetary wonders of Mars, but not for picturing local scenes. And his characters are detached, psychological creatures obsessed by one overruling, overmastering passion,—creatures who are victims of grief, of melancholia, of perversity, or of ratiocination, and who are, as



he himself was in mind, completely disassociated from any definite clime or locality. Poe lacked human sympathy and the power of observing the commonplace. Hence to delineate the negro well was for him an alien, an impossible task.

If the negro appears in other ante-bellum short stories, either he or his creator is of little importance. The short story, indeed, before the Civil War was not a favored form of literature in the South, probably because of a lack of reputable periodicals. Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth and William Gilmore Simms were in their prime, with their popularity based on novels, a few "novellettes," and still fewer brief tales. This was all changed after the war. Immediately there sprang up a distinguished group of Southern writers whose work is characterized by local color, and as a corollary by dialect, and who may be said to have founded a new school of writing. Without exception the foremost writers of this school began their literary careers by producing short stories, in most of which the negro plays an important rôle.

Mrs. Sherwood Bonner MacDowell published several of her "Gran'mammy" stories in a Northern paper before 1876, and thus was the first to give negro dialect stories to the general reading public. In the last months of her life, she collected these stories, which were published after her death (1884) as *Suwanee River Tales*. Another volume, *Dialect Tales* (1883), contains her latest work.

In the tales of Gran'mammy appears a dear old-timey aunty who is one of the best-drawn negresses in our literature. Her picture is painted with dramatic but idealistic strokes, which in the description of her death are laid on, it must be confessed, with the sentimentality of a Dickens. Mrs. MacDowell here foreshadowed the frank idealization, caused by a longing for the old days with their romantic radiance, of the negroes in Mr. Page's and Mr. Allen's work. In a number of the *Dialect Tales*, whose setting is Mississippi in the period just after the war, she has brought in the negro, as it were, for scenic effect, but in two of them has made him the only character. The amusing extravaganza, "Hieronymus Pop and the Baby," deserves wider acquaintance. While the elders of the Pop family gleefully

attended a hanging, poor 'Onymus is left to take care of Baby Tiddlekins, a provoking infant who breaks out with the "heat" and begins to squall. 'Onymus kindly lowers him in the well bucket to alleviate his discomfort, and then thoughtlessly goes off to play. The Pops on their return from the festivity discover Tiddlekins after a prolonged, nerve-racking search; and when the ingenuous 'Onymus appears he is led by his father to the wood-shed where—but let us like Mrs. Bonner draw a veil over the painful occurrence. An amusing feature of the story is the occasional lesson the mother gives Hieronymus in the intricate mysteries of the alphabet. To be sure she did not know the alphabet herself, but she soon learned that "a curly letter called S on Tuesday could not possibly be a square-shaped E on Thursday"; and for poor 'Onymus, who frequently grew confused on such nice orthographical distinctions, "Mother Pop kept a rod ready, and used it as if she were born for nothing else." Another humorous portrait of a negress is given in "Aunt Anniky's Teeth," where the principal situation is a faithless admirer's mistake in devouring a plate of "han'sum chany" teeth—he thought they were ice!

Sherwood Bonner's dialect is well managed, and except for a few minor differences, such as the use of "wash" for the customary "wuz" and the interchangeable use of "Mars'" and "Marsh," is like that of Harris and Mr. Page. She does not succeed so well with the speech of the new negro of whom she apparently considered Savannah Pop typical. For Savannah often speaks as follows: "I witnessed Hieronymus as I wandered from school. He was with a multitude of boys, who cheered without a sign of disapperation, two canine beasts that tore each other in deadly feud."

By readers and critics alike, Sherwood Bonner has been slighted; and yet her work is highly important. She anticipated the method of the entire Southern local-color school and showed, once and for all, the dramatic possibilities inherent in the negro as a character in brief fiction. Furthermore, she was the first to introduce genuine negro dialect, the first Southern woman to deal with the negro, and the first author to write of the negro segregated from the white man. Nor should her admirable characterization of Gran'mammy be forgotten.

Another early portrayal of an old Mammy was given by Mrs. Louise Clarke Pyrnelle in *Diddie, Dumps, and Tot* (1882). Perhaps "portrayal" is too strong a word, for although Mrs. Pyrnelle frankly idolized her old Mammy, she took no pains to visualize her, but rather subordinated her to Uncle Snake-bit Bob and Aunt Nancy and a dozen others, who tell stories (Chris, for instance, tells "The Tar Baby"), sing hymns, and play games in a pleasing fashion. Unfortunately, Mrs. Pyrnelle had a definite purpose to fulfill with these tales; ostensibly "to tell of the pleasant and happy relations between master and slave," but really to refute Mrs. Stowe's "slanders." And her purpose quite runs away with her. In the year 1853 Diddie, Dumps, and Tot, the little daughters of Major Waldron, of Mississippi, were living with their slave-friends a life of idyllic happiness. The book should close after this felicity has been presented, but Mrs. Pyrnelle adds a chapter ominously entitled "What Became of Them." With a cold-bloodedness usually thought characteristic only of boy-authors, she viciously disposes of her *dramatis personæ*: she shoots Major Waldron on the battlefield, drives "the once beautiful" Mrs. Waldron into the State Lunatic Asylum, widows Diddie, turns the slaves over to a freedom made up of poverty and disease, kills poor inoffensive Tot, and finally appeases the Northern Nemesis by condemning Dumps to school-teaching (so that with her salary she can help to make her mother comfortable in the asylum) and—crowning calamity—to spinsterhood. A children's book! And the logic behind it all is delicious.

Joel Chandler Harris had published in the *Countryman* and the *Savannah News* a number of his dialect tales even before Sherwood Bonner's appeared; but his first book, *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings*, came out in 1880, and only then did he reach the whole country. He is usually thought of only in connection with Uncle Remus, perhaps the greatest creation in American literature; but Uncle Remus, nevertheless, is a mere mouthpiece for the folk-tales that in themselves have made Harris famous. Remus is an idealized, aristocratic old darky, whose dominant traits are pride in Miss Sally and her boy and contempt for poor white trash and freed niggers. His stories

have for their hero Brer Rabbit, a conventional figure in the traditional lore of many primitive races, who not altogether unconsciously, one suspects, symbolizes the weakness, the dependence, and the aspirations of the black race. Brer Rabbit's supernatural cunning and intelligence, his remarkable self-control and versatility, the tricks which he plays on the stronger animals, and the adventures in which they all take part are widely known. For although Harris once wrote that he regarded his tales as "mere stuff prepared during the leisure moments of an active journalistic career, which lacks all that goes to make permanent literature," he soon realized his error. Before his death the Uncle Remus stories had been translated into twenty-seven languages, and thousands of people had been made happy by the antics of Brer Rabbit and his compeers.

But it is a common error to think of Uncle Remus as the only great character created by Harris. Fully as good as he and fully as lovable is Aunt Minervy Ann, who appears in *Plantation Pageants* (1899) telling stories to Sweetest Susan and her small brother, and in the *Chronicles of Aunt Minervy Ann* (1899), where in heroic vein she guards the war-stricken Perdue family, supporting them with her own money, or appropriating the money that her worthless husband gets for his services in the Georgia legislature, and even "jining de legislatur'" herself to aid the passage of a bill advocated by Major Perdue. One thinks also of Aunt Fountain and her prisoner; of Ananias, who, liar and thief as he is, is glorified by his unswerving fidelity to his former master; of Free Joe, one of the most pathetic characters in fiction, whose story has often been ranked (mistakenly, I think) with "Marse Chan"; and of Balaam, who does deserve to rank with Marse Chan's Sam because of his devotion to a young master as evil as Marse Chan was good. Harris has described his negroes, all of whom are ex-slaves, with a tender sympathy that is half regret; for to him slavery seemed no curse and its abolition at most a deeply disguised blessing.

Nobody has surpassed Harris's old-time negroes, and much of his success is due to his mastery of dialect. Occasionally, as in *Daddy Jake*, the *Runaway* and *Uncle Remus and His Friends*, he used the Gullah dialect, which is too unfamiliar

to be easily understood. As used in Charles C. Jones's *Negro Myths* (1888), it is still more difficult, and there one shies at the (presumably) phonetic spelling with such forms as "ägg" for "egg." The myths concern the negroes of Georgia and the Carolinas, and tell the adventures of Buh Rabbit, a decidedly less appealing animal than old Brer Rabbit. Although they have the same common traditional source as the Uncle Remus tales, they lack realism and fail to hold one's attention, because there is no central figure to bind them together. Harris created Uncle Remus because he saw that the folk-tales, if told impersonally, would be comparatively uninteresting; and in this he shows his artistic superiority to Jones.

But one could wish that Miss Martha Young had been content to tell her *Plantation Bird Legends* (1902) in the third person; for the chief impression left by the book is one of sympathy for her laborious, but unsuccessful, attempts to connect them into a unified whole,—sometimes by a crude transitional chapter, more often by such a painful sentence as "There was time for one [more!] story before sun-setting, Jess's hour to turn her face homeward, so she consented to tell the story of,"—followed by the title of the next chapter. Jess, the daughter of an old negress, Witch Menée, is an automaton who stumbles around at the beginning and end of each story. Far different is the admirable way in which Harris tells his numberless stories of Uncle Remus and makes that old darky a vital and necessary part of them. By putting Jess into the plot, Miss Young secures a certain effect of realism, but it is realism dearly bought; for Jess has no dramatic feeling, no idea of technique and artistic form, and her stories are mere undeveloped anecdotes. The legends, however, are worth nothing, because they are told by a negro girl to a crowd of young negroes, not to white children as is usual, and because they ignore Brer Rabbit to chronicle the adventures of the less familiar Preacher Crow, Mr. Peacock, Brer Buzzard, and Mis' Swallow. With more success Miss Young has recently continued these stories in *Behind the Dark Pines* (1912).

Miss Young has taken us out of our way—and ruined our



transition. For Mr. Page, who revels in romances of devoted slaves and their aristocratic but kindly masters, should follow Harris. His first story, "Marse Chan," appeared in the *Century Magazine* during 1884—three years after it had been accepted; and in 1887 was reprinted, along with "Meh Lady," "Ole 'Stracted," and others, in *In Ole Virginia*. In his subsequent work Mr. Page has not approached the high-water mark of this volume—that could not be expected. But here, as in all his studies of the slave, he has idealized him, just as he idealizes the beauty of the Southern girl, the chivalry of the Southern gentlemen, and the splendor of the entire old Southern régime. Many of his negro characters have the true nobility that one would suppose characteristic only of exceptional white Southern gentlemen; all are loyally attentive to their former masters, openly contemptuous of the new negro, and continually reminiscent of the days "befo' de war."

Sam, the ex-slave of Marse Chan, gives a résumé of Mr. Page's conception when he remarks: "Dem wuz good ole times. . . . Niggers didn' hed nothin' 'tall to do—jes' had to 'ten' to de feedin' an' cleanin' de hosses, an' doin' what de marster tell 'em to do; an' when dey wuz sick, dey had things sont 'em out de house, an' de same doctor come to see 'em whar 'ten' to de white folks when dey wuz po'ly. Dyar warn' no trouble nor nothin'." Uncle Jabez, though believing this devoutly, believed also that Lincoln's proclamation had exempted him from all duties but had obligated his old mistress to help him whenever he chose to call—and he chose to call often. Without attempting to pass on the merits of Mr. Page's attitude towards slavery, everybody will agree with Professor Edwin Mims that "it is almost the irony of fate—at least from the standpoint of the abolitionist—that the traditions of splendor and supreme distinction of the old régime should be handed down by those upon whose labor it was founded and for whose sake it was annihilated."

Sam and Meh Lady's Uncle Billy deserve their high place in Southern literature. They are paragons. In "Ole 'Stracted" Mr. Page borrows an idea from Harris's "Free Joe," and gives a touching, if exaggerated, picture of an aged slave crushed by

the responsibilities and hardships of freedom. These are his ideal post-bellum negroes. Drinkwater Torm (who is misnamed, since water seldom passed his lips) and "George Washington" are his typical slaves. They tyrannize over their masters in an incredibly open manner, which we are expected to believe both credible and typical. Singularly enough, Mr. Page has neglected the negro mammy, and when he tries to tell a story of a new-fangled negro or of the ordinary modern Virginia negro, he fails to interest us. We miss the customary Page touch. Whatever one thinks of the reality or the unreality of Sam and Billy and Torm, he is certain that none of their type now exists. They have passed away in the ruins of the Southern aristocracy, and that is why these characters with their delicate sentimentality, their genuine pathos, and their pervasive humor strike a responsive chord in every heart.

Mr. Cable's views furnish an interesting contrast to those of Mr. Page, though one runs the risk of reading into Mr. Cable's stories ideas which he has acquired from the controversial books. The masterly *Old Creole Days* (1879) is more concerned with the Creole than with the negro; yet two of these stories have quadroons as protagonists, and inveigh against the horrors of a slavery system that resulted in gross injustice to the negro woman and her descendants. Mr. Cable was bitterly opposed to slavery. The mere fact that it entailed involuntary servitude obscured for him the glitter found by other writers in a slaveholding aristocracy. These views he expresses in "The Clock in the Sky." Just before the outbreak of the war, a New England girl visited her uncle in Louisiana and became interested in a "comely" slave-girl, Sidney; so much interested as to show Sidney her disapproval of slavery and to give her a pocket-compass. (Mr. Cable expressly denies that this was a gentle hint!) Sidney fled, and guided by the compass and the clock in the sky, reached the home of the New England girl, who had then returned and who, presumably, gave the fugitive a remunerative salary for life. "Posson Jone'," that genuine masterpiece, has a negro character, but he is unimportant, and is individualized only by his name—Colossus of Rhodes. Who could wish that Mr. Cable had written of the negro instead of the Creole?

Two years after the appearance of "Marse Chan," Mr. Harry Stillwell Edwards published "The Two Runaways," introducing Major Crawford Worthington and his ex-slave and *vade-mecum*, Isam. This worthy pair are met with in a number of more recent stories, and Isam is well worth knowing. "Old Miss and Sweetheart" is a "Marse Chan" with the sex reversed, and the old aunty who tells the story is an excellent counterpart of old Sam. In general, Mr. Edwards writes of experiences directly following the war, and his negroes are of the usual sterling type whose fidelity is brought into play by the vagaries or misfortunes of their former owners; but in several stories his negroes are treated in comparative isolation. "De Valley and de Shadder," a splendid story, is a sympathetic study of negro character, and an old Southern gentleman is brought into the plot quite incidentally. Others of his stories are concerned with folk-lore, such as the hoo-doo dance; still others, with the emotional and spiritual side of the negro; and in them it is no rare occurrence to find negro dialect poetry that reminds one of Irwin Russell. Mr. Edwards's achievement is overshadowed by the fame of his late contemporary Harris, but the negro stories in *The Two Runaways* (1889) and *His Defense* (1889) assure him a prominent rank in Southern literature.

Maurice Thompson, for many years a resident of Georgia, has only a half dozen stories in which negroes appera, but in them he has given striking pictures. In 1898 they were published as *Stories of the Cherokee Hills*. In the introductory chapter to this book Thompson remarked that these tales were written in the early seventies, were offered to various magazine editors, who rejected them because of their dangerous subject-matter, and lay in manuscript for many years, the first of them, "A Race Romance," being published in 1890. He also naïvely remarked that "these bits of fiction were written with the purpose to fix in imperishable, even if crude, form the curious effects wrought by negro slavery upon the lives of the illiterate dwellers among the arid and almost inaccessible [Georgia] mountains." ("I hope," says Mrs. Behn, "the Reputation of my Pen is considerable enough to make [Oroonoko's] glorious Name to survive to all the Ages!")

The curious effects wrought by slavery show themselves in various ways. In "Rudgis and Grim," for instance, Yankee soldiers carry Grim away to save him from a beating at his master's hands, but after the war has ended he returns. Rudgis is overjoyed at this proof of affection—but he welcomes Grim with the delayed beating; and confidence having been so easily restored, the two live happily ever after. Both in plot and in execution this is ordinary enough. Thompson did far better in "Ben and Judas," which indeed, as an account of life-long companionship between a negro and a white man is equalled only by Mr. Allen's "Two Gentlemen of Kentucky." Judas is more human and less ridiculous than Mr. Allen's Peter Cotton. "A Race Romance" presents the most unusual and striking situation in the American short story. Primarily to anger his neighbors, Brimson treats the recently emancipated Rory, a gigantic negro, as an equal and attempts to educate him. He succeeds only too well, and soon drops out of the life of the community: the negro has asserted his equality, then his superiority, and finally is seen driving the spirit-broken Brimson down a lane, cursing him in every breath and flogging him viciously. For once a moral is not obtrusive, and a homely mountaineer unctiously delivers it: "Hit hev tuck erbout er million years to edicate the white man an' mek 'im reasonable decent; an' how the dernation kin ye 'spect ter tek er eejit nigger an' mek a ekal ter the white man of 'im?"

Admirable as are his characterization of Rory and his touching picture of the two gentlemen of Georgia, in minor details Thompson does not always write like a Southerner. His dialect, especially in his negro poems, lacks the sureness that comes from long and intimate association, and at times seems to have been learned from books, not life. Such a phrase as "dey kinder wommux and squommux erlong an' don't grow wof er dern" is not altogether redolent of the soil. But a similar criticism may be made of a native Georgian. Richard Malcolm Johnson handled the dialect of the Georgia "crackers" with noticeable ease, and his *Dukesborough Tales* are still read with pleasure; but his negro dialect is crude and unreal, while his negroes—in "Moll and Virgil" (1887) and "Major Jonathan

Wilby" (1890)—are unattractive to the point of repulsiveness. The "Two Gentlemen of Kentucky" (1888) was Mr. Allen's first story. The gentlemen in question are Colonel Romulus Fields and his body-servant, Peter Cotton, and the story tells the vicissitudes of the comrades—for such they were—after the war. Mr. Allen's interpretation of Peter is idealistic and somewhat sentimental; and Peter is a pathetic, lovable dorky. Furthermore he is, with the single exception of Ichabod Crane, the most extraordinary-looking figure described by an American author. During his palmiest days—of course his days of slavery—Peter had been a preacher, and to add dignity to his presence had induced Mrs. Fields to embroider his blue jeans coat with biblical texts surrounded with "a border enriched with such intricate curves, marvelous flourishes and harmonious letterings, that Solomon never reflected the glory in which Peter was arrayed." The *tout ensemble* was heightened by the word "Amen," which was embroidered exactly where the coat tails came over the end of Peter's spine, so that "one could but marvel at the sight of so solemn a word emblazoned in so unusual a locality." Many a year does this old coat, as symbolic as Dr. Dolliver's dressing-gown, cover its proud owner, until it serves at last as his shroud.

Aunt Charlotte, the other negro character created by Mr. Allen, plays an extraordinary rôle. After the war she supports herself by selling cakes and candies, while the son of her former owners, called in pure ridicule "King Solomon," becomes more and more degraded and is mockingly sold at public auction. The loyal old negress buys him for thirteen dollars, and her loving service to Solomon—her service which is given with no expectation of reward—leads to his moral regeneration. Aunt Charlotte does more to strengthen our faith in the often-termed "mythical" Southern régime and its "peculiar ties which bound the heart of the negro in years gone by to a race of not always worthy masters" than volumes would do, especially when one recalls that there is an historical basis for this story, and that Lexington, Kentucky, now boasts of a statue of King Solomon.

In his characterization of Peter and Aunt Charlotte, with their loyalty, their affection, their innate refinement, Mr. Allen has



written in his usual masterly fashion. Could he have written of others so lovable, one wonders, if he had not turned his attention entirely to the novel?

It is primarily by the novel, too, that the late Francis Hopkinson Smith, of Maryland, is known, although he has a dozen volumes of short stories to his credit. They narrate the author's personal experiences in Italy, in Holland, in England, in New York, in Virginia, but show a strange neglect of the negro,—a strange neglect because one would naturally expect an artist's eye to seize upon and to transcribe into his fiction the picturesque qualities of the negro. Mr. Smith, in fact, did so in several short stories; particularly in *Colonel Carter of Cartersville* (1891), a series of connected tales in which old Nebuchadnezzar (or Chad, as he is called) surpasses in interest the Colonel, who, to tell the truth, is sadly exaggerated. Chad is the conventional old ante-bellum dandy who refuses after the war to desert his old master or to associate with poor whites and free blacks. As a man-of-all-work he upholds the Colonel's reputation during their stay in New York, while his wife Henny guards the old house at Cartersville. Good fortune comes to Colonel Carter: a rich coal-vein is discovered on his estate, partly through Chad's agency; and his first thought is to relieve the faithful old servant of work and to give him a competency for the remainder of his days. "I tell you, suh," the Colonel declares, "the color of a man's skin don't make much difference, sometimes; Chad was bawn a gentleman and he'll never get over it."

An altogether different note is struck in "An Incident" (1899), where Miss Sarah Barnwell Elliott introduces Abram, a type of the brute-negro of whom Mr. Thomas Dixon later wrote in the *Leopard's Spots* and the *Clansman*. Speaking of the negro's awful menace to Southern women, one of her characters remarks: "I'd not leave one out in the country like Mr. Morris did; no, Sir, not in these days. We could do it before the war and during the war, but not now. The old niggers were taught some decency; but these young ones! God help us, for I don't see any safety for this country 'cept Judge Lynch." With such an idea of the South's negro-problem, Miss Elliott tells a horrible story with an art that keeps one's nerves as taut as a bowstring.

So far as I am aware, no other Southern short story deals with this theme. And even Miss Elliott considers it "an incident," for to happier themes she has turned in several stories that tell of the devoted faithfulness of the ex-slaves Kizzy and Daddy Jack, who are of the heroic mould common to most negro characters in Southern fiction. They speak, by the way, a variety of the Gullah dialect.

Mrs. Virginia Fraser Boyle has done her most attractive work in the *Devil Tales* (1900). The title suggests the subject-matter of the book: Mrs. Boyle writes of a folk-lore that was as prominent in negro life as that of Uncle Remus—the folk-lore that pivoted around the Devil, his emissaries, and his deadly enemy, the hoo-doo man. The stories, for the most part, are told to the children of the "Big House" by negro mammies, and with justice Mrs. Boyle terms herself the "chronicler of the Scheherazade of the nursery." The Devil, as she describes him, is an amazingly vital personality who quits hell at will to wander, with mischief-making intent, through the Quarters, though strangely he fails to molest the inhabitants of the Big House; and his speech in negro dialect (which of course the birds and beasts also use) is decidedly clever and amusing. The motif of many of these stories is that of *Dr. Faustus*. Of Shadrach who sells his soul to the devil, the old mammy says: "Better folks an' whiter folks 'n Shadrach done gone an' done hit, an' er doin' hit yit, . . . but hit hai'n't gwine ter pay in de long run; hit gwine ter peter out mighty painful." The poor old Devil is usually vanquished by the hoo-doo man. In "Dark er de Moon" Uncle Abijah, a brilliant luminary in the black arts of hoo-dooism, rescues after strenuous efforts a negro girl who has been inveigled into agreeing to marry the Devil. With all the maddening persistence of a ballad blacksmith pursuing his disdainful lady-love, the Devil disguises himself as a terrapin, a serpent, a fly, and nearly drives the poor girl to distraction; but through these and other transformations old Unc' 'Jah pursues and finally routs him. In "The Devil's Little Fly" Mr. Charles sells his soul to Satan in order to win the affections of a beautiful girl—or at least Zacheus thinks so; and in his desire to aid, Zacheus frees Mr. Charles from his terrible bargain,—but the girl marries the other

fellow. Hoo-dooism is the motif also of the humorous "Old Cinder Cat," a story in which Maumer Ysbel enables Juno to win back Solon's alienated affection.

Sometimes Mrs. Boyle tells mere plantation incidents. In such a story as "A Kingdom for Micajah," where old Cage, temporarily freed by his master, commits petty thefts to insure the removal of his despised freedom, she puts herself on record as believing that the slave's lot was easy and happy. Yet she has no thesis to prove, nor is she sentimental over the old days. The slave interested Mrs. Boyle because of his superstitions, his peculiar religious beliefs, and his skill in narration; she looks into his mind with perfect understanding. If her uncles and aunties, who undoubtedly lack originality, linger in one's mind out of proportion to their intrinsic merit, that is because Mrs. Boyle has made them tell stories which are not only entertaining in subjects but also perfect in structure. As a technician she has few equals among negro-story writers.

But, one is tempted to ask, did the slave spend all of his time in story-telling? Apart from boasting of his master's magnificence, what were his diversions? Was his life so bound up in the whims of his superiors that except in the shadow of the Big House, with its somewhat oppressive atmosphere of aristocracy, nothing worth mentioning happened to him? Paul Laurence Dunbar's *In Old Plantation Days* (1903) makes a few concessions to convention and sentiment by sketching an Aunt Tempe who wheedles a Mr. Mordaunt in more than Drinkwater Torm style or a young Lucius who idolizes his boy-master à la "Marse Chan"; but, as a usual thing, leaves the Big House behind, enters the Quarters, and gives racy sketches in which slaves, quite apart from their kindly owners, behave like actual men and women,—faithful, to be sure, but more concerned about their own bodily and spiritual pleasures than about abstract ideals of fidelity and grandeur. Dunbar depicts characters who, though not individually great, taken collectively present the truest and most realistic pictures of the ante-bellum negro. Everywhere he keeps the slave's viewpoint: other story-writers customarily view the slave through the master's eye. With rare tact he ignored the darker aspect of slavery, not because he was unaware of its existence, but because he thought it exceptional

and believed that in the humor and fun of the negro's everyday life lay a truer picture of ante-bellum conditions. Nevertheless, Dunbar's talents were not those of a short-story writer. He could only sketch.

His inability to get emotional results from dramatic situations (and at choosing dramatic situations he was remarkably apt) shows itself more plainly in the *Heart of Happy Hollow* (1904). "The Lynching of Jabe Benson," for example, could be made into a powerfully effective answer to Miss Elliott's "Incident," but as handled by Dunbar the situation falls flat, the tragedy of the *dénouement* leaves one's emotions but slightly stirred. He wrote brief but rambling tales devoid of climactic development and so marred by a wrong shift of emphasis as to leave vague impressions. Dunbar frankly cared more for the modern representatives of his race than for the slaves; and in *Happy Hollow* a modulated strain of protest against the South's misconception of the modern negro combines with the evident desire of pointing out the negro's progress in business, education, and morality to form a series of half-didactic and ineffectual tales. When Dunbar writes of educated negro ministers and lawyers, he is tiresome; when he treats humorous episodes from the life of the average negro—as in "A Judgment of Paris"—he follows the trail blazed by Mrs. Stuart, and is highly successful.

Mrs. Stuart's first story, "Lamentations of Jeremiah Johnson," published in 1888, indicated the field that was to become pre-eminently her own. What Dunbar did for the slave, Mrs. Stuart has done for the new negro. More than any other, she has realized and visualized the humble romance of the prosaic-looking negro cabin, has glorified its commonplace details and lifted them into the realm of art. Harris himself, shortly before his death, wrote to Mrs. Stuart: "You have got nearer the real heart of the negro than any of us." Mrs. Stuart writes not of the pampered slave, or the faithful freedman, or the educated negro of Dunbar's tales, but of the illiterate, happy-go-lucky, good-natured negro who is typical of the new South, describing with a facile pen his defects, his virtues, his whims, his everyday actions. She does not mention the evil negro, who she thinks is abnormal; nor does she ridicule the negro, although her deline-

ation of him is strongly colored with a subtle humor or humor and pathos are inimitably blended, as in the sweet little story of "Queen Anne." The ludicrous but (as anybody who knows the Southern negro will admit) typical names which her characters bear, aid the reader's memory. Who could forget Queen of Sheba Jackson, or Lamentations of Jeremiah Johnson, or Petty Larceny? But Mrs. Stuart has rather given a realistic picture of negro life in general than created any one remarkable character, though we are grateful for Sonny's father (that refreshing monologist), Napoleon Jackson ("The Gentleman of the Plush Rocker"), and Salina Sue. Mrs. Stuart's rank in literature will probably not be so high as Harris's, because of the greater inherent value of his subjects; yet without doubt as a portrayeur of realistic negro characters, Mrs. Stuart far excels Harris, Mr. Page, Dunbar, and the rest. It is worth noting, too, that she has written more stories—some twelve volumes—about the negro than any other writer.

Other authors,—notably Armistead C. Gordon, Samuel Minturn Peck, John Trotwood Moore, Harrison Robertson, Miss Grace King, Miss Alice French, Mrs. Burton Harrison, and Mrs. M. E. M. Davis,—might be considered, but in their few negro stories nothing new is to be pointed out. The surprising fact is that only three of the South's major short-story writers have neglected the negro: Charles Egbert Craddock, Mr. John Fox, and O. Henry. Miss Murfree and Mr. Fox, following the usual custom of getting types from a nearby literary garden-patch, have written of the Tennessee mountaineer and the Kentucky backwoodsman; while O. Henry threw a bomb into the local-color camp, and went to New York to peer into the lives of the "four million." That Craddock and Mr. Fox could have managed the negro well is obvious enough; it is just as obvious that Porter's exaggerated sense of the unreal in fiction would have prevented his describing a Marse Chan just as it would have prevented his describing a Berenice or a White Old Maid. His horror of seeming to be sentimental or serious crops out when he writes that Uncle Jake had "nothing of the 'stage' about him: his black suit neatly fitted; his shoes shone, and his straw hat was banded with a gaudy ribbon." Imagine O. Henry



describing a Peter Cotton! But Uncle Jake will not be soon forgotten, because of the cleverness with which he upheld the traditions of Southern breeding by solving, as nobody else has ever done, the Stocktonized puzzle of "Thimble, Thimble." And some readers will remember Uncle Bushrod, who by reminding Robert Weymouth of how he "went th'ough de war as yo' body-servant tell we whipped de Yankees and sont 'em back to de No'th," awakens Weymouth's conscience, and proves himself to be a genuine "Guardian of the Accolade."

The old-fashioned negro—Chad, Judas, Uncle Remus, *et al.*,—exists to-day only in fiction. So much has been written, and written well, of him that his possibilities seem to have been exhausted. Unless, then, one follows after the *Clansman*, Mrs. Stuart, by her choice of the typical present-day Southern negro as the hero of her stories, has opened the only field that still remains for the portrayer of negro character. And why should pictures of the everyday Southern negro not be as valuable as pictures of his more refined ancestors?

HYDER E. ROLLINS.

Cambridge, Mass.

## A RUSSIAN NOVELIST'S ESTIMATE OF THE RUSSIAN INTELLECTUAL

The future of Russia, perhaps more than that of any other nation engaged in the great European War, is causing much speculation on the part of political students. What will be her position among the world powers if the Allies win, or what changes will there be, if any, in her present position if Germany wins? But more important than her future position is the question as to what changes the war will bring in her internal political, social, and industrial conditions. With the possible exception of Turkey, Russia is the only one of the warring nations whose government is purely autocratic. It is true that a step has been made toward obtaining a more representative form of government. The organization of the Duma in 1905 was looked upon as a great success for those desiring popular representation, but subsequent events show that the government to-day is just as highly autocratic as it was during the first half of the nineteenth century. The Czar is still supreme in Russia. With the assistance of a highly developed bureaucracy he rules absolutely and without any check—except his conscience.

The political life of Russia has always been a troubled one, but more particularly so during the past hundred years. With the gradual awakening of the intellectual class of the people by the introduction of the liberal ideas of foreign thinkers has come a desire for a democratic form of government. The result has been revolution succeeding revolution. The intolerable political conditions, the ignorance of the masses of the people, and Russia's backward industrial development, combined with the small hope of securing relief from the government, have been responsible for many of the revolutions. Other revolutions, too, have been narrowly averted by appeals to national patriotism, or by grudging concessions from the imperial ruler. Many of Russia's wars, it has been said, have been waged by Russia for no other reason than to distract the minds of the people from their own oppression. It has even been authori-

tatively stated that the Russo-Japanese War, though apparently ending disastrously for the Russian government, really prolonged the life of the present monarchy. On the other hand, the people have often been quieted by concessions to popular demands, though until very recent date these concessions have been of little political significance. The only concession of much importance was the granting of a form of national representation, just after the revolution of 1905 by a manifesto of the 17th of October of that year. Much good was expected to follow the creation of the Duma, which was considered at the time a step towards a more democratic government, but the hopes of the people in the dawn of a brighter political era have proved groundless. Considering the remarkable advance of representative government in other countries during the past one hundred years, Russia's political conditions to-day are even worse than in the first half of the nineteenth century. The people are still clamoring for popular government; they are demanding a voice in the affairs of government. No doubt the European War came just at a time when their clamorings were ready to burst forth stronger than ever and with more resistless power. A war abroad, perhaps, has saved a revolution at home. Or has it merely postponed the inevitable?

With such a great expanse of territory, with powerful natural resources, with such a vast reservoir of potential energy, one is inclined to wonder why it is that Russia is so far behind other nations in every way; more especially, why it is that in modern times when liberal ideas of government seem to have achieved such force, that political conditions in Russia are hardly better than they were a hundred years ago? It has remained for a Russian himself, perhaps the world's greatest novelist, Ivan Turgenev, in a series of remarkably constructed novels, to give us the clearest and deepest analysis of the intellectual Russian mind. Turgenev wrote of the intellectual man of 1840 and after, but his estimates apply just as well to the educated man of Russia of to-day, and are just as accurate now as they were then. A few words as to Turgenev himself.

Ivan Turgenev was born at Orel, Russia, in 1818, and died at Bourgival, near Paris, on the 4th of September, 1883. He

therefore lived through one of the many "storm and stress periods" of Russian history. Born of a well-to-do land-owning and serf-owning family, he was enabled to receive an excellent education both at home and in foreign universities. He did not begin literary work in earnest until about 1840, when his first novel of any length, *Rudin*, was published. Its appearance immediately stamped him as one of the world's greatest novelists. This novel was followed by others, all wonderful studies in human nature and showing a deep insight into the conditions of Russia's social life and of her politics. Turgenev was a broad-minded liberal, and as editor of a political paper did much towards awakening the *élite* of Russian society to a true knowledge of their weaknesses and their failures. Though Turgenev ranks at the top as a novelist, he has also been acknowledged as one of the foremost of Russian political students and prophets. Here I want to call attention merely to his estimates of the character of the intellectual Russian.

The conflicting conditions of the people of Russia—on the one hand an arrogant aristocracy, and on the other millions of human beings living in squalor and misery—have been instrumental in producing a type of literature peculiar to that country, and best exemplified in the novels of Tolstoy, Gontcharov, and Turgenev. As a novelist Turgenev is probably the greatest, and it is in two of his novels—*Rudin* and *On the Eve*—that we have the best results of his studies of Russian life. In these novels one comes across the best variation of the theme that each Russian writer of the last century was concerned with: the intelligent man in Russia is useless and incapable of practical activity. But before proceeding with a discussion of these two novels it is necessary to give a brief exposition of the divisions of Russian society, and the place of the intellectual man in that society.

Roughly the people may be classified into three divisions. The first great division consists of the nobles and their descendants. This is the ruling class, and the bureaucracy is largely, in fact, almost entirely, composed of members of this class. In this division might also be included some of the great landowners, other than descendants of the nobles. Next comes the class of the small landowners, the merchants, the artisans. As a third

class there are the great mass of the peasants, descendants of the serfs, who were freed by the manifesto of 1861. The intellectual man of Russia, as a rule, comes from the second class. Often highly educated at home or abroad, filled with liberal ideal of government, yet shut out from a participation in governmental affairs, he has spent his life in dreaming of what ought to be. "Their spirits soared high; their ideas were astonishingly radical for the period; but physically they were compelled to live in an atmosphere saturated with the ignorance of the people and the arbitrary brutality of the government." The result of their anomalous position upon the characters of these men is thus described: "The impossibility of realizing the dreamed-of ideal, of giving oneself to some practical task, led the *élite* of the time to develop themselves on *one side only*, at the cost of stultifying the will. This mixture of culture and deficient will-power is characteristic of the Russian 'intellectual.' The type of 'intellectual' without a will fills the literature of the first half of the nineteenth century. As the novel occupied the place of honor in this literature, the heroes of the most remarkable novels of this period are merely so many variants of the same type."

The great writers of Russia were all, during the period between 1825 and the present time, political writers of one sort or another. Liberty, political liberty, was the theme of all her poets, from the national poets Pushkin and Lermontov down to the humblest sonneteer. And the great novelists—Russia's greatest novelists of this age, Tolstoy, Gontcharov, Turgenev—made the downfall of aristocracy and bureaucracy, and faith and hope in a better political era the theme of all their novels. Each of these writers looked earnestly forward to a time when Russia should free herself from the age-old autocratic government, and when every man should have a voice in the affairs of government. Each of them—none knew better—was acutely aware of the intolerable conditions of the poorer classes—of the peasants, who were freed by the edict of 1861, and whose condition since then had hardly been improved. In the minds of these writers there was no country where reform was more needed, or where there was as little likelihood that true reformers—men capable of accomplishing things, of leading



other men, and of securing and building up a stable democratic government—would arise. These writers had faith in Russia; they believed in her ultimate attainment of political, industrial, and social liberty. But notwithstanding their faith in Russia, they had little faith in the men of their age. The intelligent men of the latter half of the nineteenth century, students of political economy and of sociology, preachers, socialists, dreamers, artists, philosophers, are characterized by Turgenev as "either small fry, nibblers, Hamlets on a small scale, self-absorbed, or idle babblers, and wooden sticks. Or else they are like this: they study themselves to the most shameful detail, and are forever feeling the pulse of every sensation and reporting to themselves." These men realized the intolerable conditions, the need of reconstruction, of reform; they knew what they wanted, but they were powerless to accomplish anything. The cry of the great novelist, "When will *men* be born among us?" was the cry of the deep thinkers of Turgenev's age.

Without considering Turgenev's rank merely as a novelist, it can be said of him that of all the writers of his age he was the deepest and clearest student of the intellectual Russian. Combine with this his keen perception of the political and social conditions of the people around him, and he becomes the most accurate political prophet of Russia. His knowledge of the intellectual Russian is summed up in his novel *Rudin*; in *On the Eve* he has shown his lack of faith in the Russian man, and turned to a foreigner for his ideal of the man who is to gain political liberty for the Russians.

Dmitri Rudin, the hero of the novel of the same name, is the typical intellectual Russian of the period of 1840 and after. His early life is not important, except that he was the only son of a mother who idolized him. His education was received at Russian schools and from foreign universities, where he amassed a great store of information on many different subjects. At school he was for a time the leader—in words—of his friends. They loved to gather around him and to listen to his discourses. Leaving college he accepted a position in the government service. Later he became the patron of a wealthy prince, and then of the widow, Darya Alexyevna. It is there that we first meet him.

Rudin is a brilliant man; his knowledge is diversified, he is an eloquent, irresistible debater, and he can talk interestingly on most subjects. Full of enthusiasm, prepared at all times to talk convincingly on subjects dear to his friends, ready to give advice and to analyse the emotions of himself and of others, he attracts the attention of everyone when he enters a room and begins to speak. His brilliant speech, his warm enthusiasm, his apparent sincerity impress his listeners with the fact that a powerful man is in their midst. But later this opinion is changed. At college the friends who listened so attentively to Rudin and who received inspiration from him, in turn became his enemies. Later in his life his patrons turned from him in the same manner, and his admirers ceased to admire. What caused the changes?

The trouble with Rudin was that at heart he was as cold as ice. "He was a giant in words, and a pigmy in deeds." The enthusiasm of which he was so full springs altogether from the head. Thus he is capable for a time of impressing and of inspiring others, but only until they discover his great weakness: his inability to accomplish anything himself. This is clearly shown in the peasant student Bassitoff's admiration for Rudin, and in the attitude of Natalya towards him.

The supreme test comes to Rudin in the love of Natalya. A girl of seventeen, having lived in a secluded manner all her life, Natalya is completely fascinated by the advent of Rudin with his enthusiasm, his eloquence, his fine words. She listens to his discourses on politics, on literature, and on social problems as one charmed. Rudin plans his future, telling her of the many things he will do. He even sketches in many of the details. Natalya catches his enthusiasm, becomes interested in his future and the things he intends to accomplish, and before long is deeply in love with him. But her mother, Darya Alexeyevna, learns of her daughter's love, and forbids her seeing Rudin again. Natalya knowing this arranges to meet Rudin in a secluded place. Her purpose is to fly with him: remembering his professions of love, she never dreams he will not take her with him. They meet. She tells him of her mother's objection to him, and declares that she loves him and will go with him anywhere. And what does Rudin say?

"There is no hope; we must submit."

And that expression sums up his character, shows clearly his weakness. He was all eloquent phrases, learned discourses, with much talk about what should be done, and what he would accomplish; but when it came to actions, he was helpless. And that was the trouble with the intellectual man of Turgenev's time.

In *Rudin* Turgenev represents Russia in the girl Natalya. To his mind his country was young, just awakening, eager for a leader. Natalya's ready acceptance of Rudin with his shallowness and his weakness, his enthusiasm and eloquence, and her complete disavowal of him when she realizes his helplessness where action is demanded, typifies Russia—her need and the men to whom she has turned for help, and who have proved themselves unequal to the task of working out her salvation.

In *On the Eve* Turgenev again represents his country by a young girl, Elena, one of the few beautiful woman characters of fiction. Like Natalya, Elena is imaginative, idealistic, eagerly looking out upon the unknown, and full of a serious courage. But unlike Natalya her life has not been entirely secluded. She has two friends—two lovers—Bersenyev the student, and Shubin the artist. These two men are close friends, even though they love the same girl. They have loved her a long while. Bersenyev is a philosopher, and altogether interested in philosophical problems. Shubin is a sculptor, full of poetry, of life, of playful moods, and of petulance. Of the two Elena prefers Bersenyev, because to her his aims seem loftier and his purposes more useful than those of Shubin.

And then there comes a change. A Bulgarian, Insarov, a college friend of Bersenyev's, is introduced to Elena. Insarov is in Russia in the interest of Bulgaria. His whole heart is filled with a desire to gain freedom for his country; every moment of his time is spent in furthering that desire. Elena becomes interested in Insarov's plans and purposes. What, thinks she, can be nobler than such love for one's country, such devotion to a cause? Surely, she exclaims, here is a man whom I can trust to do things. Shubin and Bersenyev no longer interest her; she has met a man who appeals infinitely more to her heart. From the moment she sees him she acknowledges him as her leader; and she soon is in love with him,

The difficulties surrounding their courtship are even greater than those confronting Natalya and Rudin. But neither Insarov nor Elena falters for a moment. When Insarov tells Elena he will marry her, but that they must leave at once for Bulgaria, the girl is overjoyed, although the step means separation from her people. Such action by Insarov simply proves him a man of action, not of words like Rudin. And her faith and trust in Insarov is not misplaced. Owing to sickness Insarov is prevented from ever reaching Bulgaria, but he dies in an attempt to further the cause of his country's liberty.

These two books are remarkable in their similarity. In each Russia is represented by a young girl: in the one by Natalya, and in the other by Elena. Each girl was earnestly seeking a man of purpose, of power, who would not only talk but act. Natalya thought she had found such a man in Rudin—the intellectual; but she soon discovered that her first estimate of him was altogether wrong, that in fact he was weak and helpless to accomplish the things he urged others and himself, too, to accomplish. Elena discarded Bersenyev the student, and Shubin of the artistic temperament, and turned to Insarov—a foreigner, yet a man with the noblest ideals and sincerest purposes. And Insarov measured up to her estimate of him.

What is Turgenev seeking to show in these two novels? Primarily his distrust of his country's weakness. He knew only too well the shallowness and ineffectiveness of the intellectual Russian; and he knew that a different, an altogether new type of man, would have to be developed before many changes for the better could be brought about in his country. And that is the reason he makes the hero of *On the Eve* a Bulgarian—a foreigner.\*

Russia, says Turgenev, is on the eve of an awakening; and when she does awake, when a portion of her vast potential energy is set free, she will astonish the other nations by the rapidity of her progress. Doubtless the Great War may mean the dawning of that brighter era for Russia which the great novelist looked forward to with such prophetic vision.

H. ST. GEORGE TUCKER.

Raleigh, N. C.

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\* NOTE.—I might mention here that many of the industrial improvements of Russia are attributed to the energy of the German element of the population. It may be interesting, too, to note that the conqueror of Premszyl is a Bulgarian—General Dimitrieff.

## POPULAR FEASTS AND LEGENDS IN ITALY

The popular soul of Italy has from the remotest times consecrated every important occurrence, and has celebrated it with feasts, contests, fairs, tourneys, each having a special significance. Occasionally a traditional custom falls into desuetude and a festival is abolished, thus lessening the spiritual essence of legacies that had seemed to be consecrated forever. This is not frequent, for the Italian with his warm nature, his exquisite feeling, his ingenuity, and his nostalgic longings, is loath to adapt himself to the binding forms of modern life with its deafening noise of machinery, but still lingers in contemplation of his past history, and of traditions which are almost all glorious, poetical, and beautiful.

I intend here to write briefly in the order of their occurrence concerning some of the typical feasts that are still celebrated, and some of the traditions that still find an echo in the heart of the race and communicate to those who love them the delicate charm of former times.

The popular feasts that have been and are still most widely known outside of Italy are those of the *Veglia del Redentore* at Venice; the *Corsa del Palio* at Siena; and the *Festa di Piedigrotta* at Naples, not to mention the many and varied festivities of New Year, of Easter Sunday, of All Saints' Day, of Christmas; and in every city the feast of the Patron Saint, and for every individual, the ceremonies, often very curious, which mark the important dates and events of Christian life: the baptism, the confirmation, the first communion, the wedding, and the funeral.

The methods of celebrating days that are observed as holidays elsewhere differ widely in various parts of Italy. A typical instance, the New Year's festival at Bologna, will indicate how this celebration may depart from what is practised in other countries.

### NEW YEAR AT BOLOGNA

The last day of December is about to vanish in the wintry stillness of the night and through the old winding streets of the



city, under the convent-like porticos that line the main thoroughfares, in the dim light of the lamps moves a fantastic and noisy crowd. Suddenly a chime is heard, and with it, in the distance, an indistinct but festive clamor of voices and laughter. Let us watch from a balcony. *Eccolo! eccolo!* shout many at a time, and shortly we see advancing the strangest and most picturesque procession in the world. A colossal white ox with majestic horns, splendidly decorated with ribbons of many colors, and with flowers around his neck, on his back, and hanging from his tail, leads the way. Beside the solemn beast a fine-looking peasant, tall and strong, with a swarthy face and the characteristic soft hat pulled down over his forehead, marches on with the slow gait of a ploughman and the gravity of a judge. It is the procession of the *bue grasso* (fat ox), of that same ox which the good Petroniani (the Bolognesi are called thus from their Patron Saint Petronio) have been admiring for a week past on two magnificent canvases exposed on the walls of the old Palazzo del Commune (City Hall). And the beast is the most coveted *strenna* of New Year for the lucky winner of the traditional lottery of the *bue grasso*.

A crier shouts, "Tickets for the *bue grasso*; only two cents each!" Whereupon the crowd hastens to buy the tickets which bear the image of the ox.

Midnight is about to strike and the square of San Petronio, the dream of great artists and poets, is unusually animated. Then suddenly silence prevails and all eyes are turned to the large city clock that marks implacably the flight of time. One minute! Everyone is still as if by order and all remain in a state of expectancy that has something solemn and sacred about it. Instantly from the lofty hill of San Michele in Bosco the cannon roars. It is the signal. While the city clock slowly strikes out the old year, hundreds, thousands of Roman candles are lighted and waved from the buildings and shine like a fantastic fire over the throng. Then a pyrotechnic dove lights simultaneously through the square the legend of the new year, glittering before everyone with the omen of good wishes and hope. The number! the number! All turn to the balcony of the Podestà where glowingly emerges from the green and reddish

smoke of the fireworks in large figures written on a white flag the lucky number of the lottery of the *bue grasso*. A moment of hesitancy and then a voice is heard crying: "It's mine! it's mine!" The ox is thereupon turned over to the winner. Then from the centre of the square, ten or twelve bands followed by a cheering crowd of boys and men set out in every direction towards the ancient gates of the town to communicate to all quarters the joy that reached its climax in the heart of the city, the square of San Petronio. And as the bands go through the streets, all who had not left their homes but had awaited, nevertheless, in trepidation the roars of the cannon, appear at the windows to cheer and greet the passing multitude. In the early hours of the morning, when the streets are no longer thronged, countless little wandering orchestras will give serenades in the old residence districts of the city, stopping under the windows of the most prominent citizens to extend the musical greetings of the new year and receive often the small change of good omen.

Thus the year closes and thus begins in Bologna *la dotta* and *la grassa*, as Carducci sang.

#### THE FALLEN IDOL

In many towns and villages of Northern Italy it is still customary on the day preceding Lent to go through the ceremony of the funeral and burning of the Carnival. An enormous puppet swaying over the heads of a crowd of peasants, like a monstrous idol of pagan times, is paraded through the streets. The ugly puppet with its reddish and bulging face, its large and grotesque body, a true portrayal of drunkenness, advances with the accompaniment of a discordant brass band and amid the clamor of a festive crowd. On the public square a pile of firewood is awaiting its victim. A circle of people is formed around it; a signal is given and the huge puppet is angrily hurled upon the pyre. Thus is the Carnival sacrificed. In former times it was customary also to throw upon the fire the masks and all the other signs that would remind one of the deposed sovereign and of his rule, but economic or other considerations seem to have eliminated this additional waste.

In other parts of Italy the puppet represents the *Befana* (in folk-lore, the fairy that brings good children sweetmeats on Epiphany eve) and the burning of it takes place on the day of the Epiphany (January 6th). The significance of this allegory naturally lends itself to wider interpretation. Of how many things does indeed the dawn of a new year mark the death!

#### MAY FESTIVALS

The May festivals, which sprang from the very ancient pagan feasts in honor of the returning Spring, are all celebrated with a note of green and light. The Florence of the grand dukes and of the Medici has given us in art a most vivid remembrance of these feasts. Boys and girls adorned with flowers sang the glory of returning May in songs still preserved in literature and in many cases by oral transmission among the people:—

*Ben torna Maggio  
E il gonfalon selvaggio; . . . .*

but to-day the celebration of Calendimaggio (May 1st) is largely artificial with its expositions, its contests, its horse races, and its many spectacles of fireworks. And this is especially true in the large cities where the festivities of May 1st are not very dissimilar from those of Labor Day in this country.

Occasionally, however, a note of gaiety is added to this modern celebration of the day as is the case in Bologna where another famous lottery takes place. This is appropriately called the lottery of the *uomo felice* (happy man). The price of the ticket is two cents and the winner receives a voluminous *carnet* or book of coupons good for one year. One of the coupons gives him free subscription to all the city newspapers; another free admission to all the theatres; one gives him the privilege of getting a shave twice a week at the best barber shop, while another is good at any dry-goods store once a week for a pair of gloves, a collar, and a tie. Still another entitles the holder to four suits of clothes at some of the best tailoring establishments in the city, and finally another (*dulcis in fundo*) is good at such and such restaurants for one dinner, two breakfasts, and two suppers a week. Enough, indeed, to make a man happy.

A GREAT RELIGIOUS CEREMONY

To speak of the many poetical and magnificent religious feasts of the sweet *mese di Maria*, as the month of May is still called by Italians, would be too long, but we may fittingly sketch for the reader the great procession of the *Madonna of San Luca* at Bologna, a procession which in magnitude, splendor, and genuine religious feeling is doubtless unrivalled in Italy.

Every year, on the Saturday preceding the day of the Ascension, from the top of the *Monte della Guardia* where rises the Sanctuary of the *Madonna of San Luca* is carried down to the city on the shoulders of picked men the massive niche containing a famous image of the Virgin piously attributed to Saint Luke. The distance is more than two miles of most wonderful arcades having 666 arches and constructed between 1674 and 1739.

On that day the ancient city of towers is unusually animated. The entire clergy of the diocese followed by all the religious associations in their picturesque costumes and carrying all their insignia, sacred images, crucifixes, and baldachins, move slowly toward the mountain from a monumental arch that marks the starting point of the ascension.

This religious ceremony assumes all the characteristics of a great civic holiday. The windows of every house are gorgeously decorated and crowded with eager and joyful onlookers. The city traffic is paralyzed and all the stores half closed. National flags are unfurled over all the public buildings and private residences, and the air resounds with a glorious harmony of ringing bells.

The procession now returns from the Sanctuary of San Luca, and the Archbishop, who follows on foot the sacred image of the Madonna, gives the benediction to the crowd standing in reverence on both sides and answering in low tones the prayers uttered by the priests.

The procession appears after a few hours of march at the ancient *Porta Saragozza* and the cannon announces to the entire population that the Madonna enters the city. Then, through the main streets the procession halts at the church of St. Peter's and

the *Madonna of San Luca* is raised over the main altar of the church where it remains until the following Thursday, the day of the Ascension.

During the intervening days there is a continuous stream of people to and from the cathedral, and the city administration, regardless of the political party in power, is by force of custom compelled to decorate the windows of the City Hall with the insignia of the Commune.

The legend informs us that, owing to an accident which occurred the year before, when one of the carriers was crushed to death, the ecclesiastical and civil authorities decided to forbid this historic procession. But on the morning following the traditional Saturday, upon the altar consecrated to the age-old custom the clergy and the people saw the miraculous Virgin who had come at night all alone from the Sanctuary to revive the faith of the people.

On Ascension day, with the same ceremonies of the preceding Saturday, the procession starts again towards the sacred mountain where the Madonna is to remain till the next May.

#### IN THE HEIGHT OF SUMMER

Summer, the preferred season of the Romans who in olden times dedicated the month *sextilis* to Augustus and later called it August, a name which remained even after the Gregorian reform of the calendar, has preserved among Italians many feasts and traditions.

According to a poetical legend of Romagna the clear moon of August has a prophetic virtue that is still invoked with a gentle rite by the girls of the people in order to know the secrets of love which the future may have in store for each of them. When the moon is full and bright and everything is quiet, the girls put on their light-colored dresses and, with their hair flowing in the evening breeze, go out in the open and for seven consecutive days repeat the candid stanza:—

*Luna che in ciel risplendi  
Fammi sognar dormendo  
Chi sposerò vivendo.*

It is believed that on the night following the seventh invocation, the virgin has in a dream the revelation of her future lover.



In some of the small communities of the province of Siracusa in Sicily it is believed that at Cammarana near Scoglitti is buried an enchanted treasure that will be secured on the night of August 14th by a married man who does not repent of marriage; as a local saying has it: Whoever marries without repenting will get the treasure of Cammarana.

According to the story, the Turks destroyed in ancient times a temple erected in that place and hurled into the sea a statue of the Madonna and the bells of the church. Each year on the night preceding the feast of August 15th, everyone affirms that a mysterious noise is heard in that spot as if a desperate battle is going on, and then follows a gloomy sound of bells. No one dares to approach the enchanted place that night, and thus from a legend of terror springs a legend of promise and the treasure unrecovered perpetuates the double charm.

Very strange are also some of the customs of mid-August in Sicily, especially on the day of the Assumption. No transactions or contracts are closed on that day, and from all the country districts a long line of mules and donkeys loaded with sacks of wheat is led by a jovial throng of peasants to the town church for the traditional blessings. After the ceremony of the benediction several sacks are left by each owner as an offering to the pastor.

Another custom which is found practically throughout Italy is that of the benediction pronounced upon all sorts of domestic animals on the day of St. Anthony, the patron saint of swineherds. Nothing, indeed, is more strange than the procession towards a church usually seen on that occasion. The priest is awaiting the crowd in the vestibule of the church with the missal opened before him and the holy water ready to be sprinkled over a most striking variety of animals. And a singular sight it is! Men and women of all classes are there with dogs, cats, parrots, canary birds, white mice, magpies, little monkeys, chickens,—in a word, all the dwellers of the most picturesque court yard.

#### THE PALIO OF SIENA

One of the most characteristic feasts, still celebrated with all the pomp and enthusiasm of the past, is the *Palio*, the spectacular

horse-race in the *Piazza del Campo* at Siena on the second day of July and on the 16th of August. The event gives us an adequate idea of how the *Palio* was staged hundreds of years ago.

The old square of the *Campo*, shaped like a Roman amphitheatre, seems to be especially constructed for great spectacles and popular feasts. The *Palio* with its religious and civic ceremonies has still so noble and powerful traditions among the people that no attempt will ever succeed in changing its ceremonial, much less in abolishing it.

Every quarter of the city enters the race with its champion horse, and the rivalry among the contestants and the various sections of the town is intense. All hearts are centered upon the coveted prize, the *Palio*. Those who take part in the race are dressed in accordance with the traditional customs, and the *Palio* is thus a magnificent historical pageant full of interest and excitement.

The opening ceremony of the great event may be said to take place at the City Hall where horses are raffled off and assigned to each quarter of the city. When this is over trial races are held for three consecutive days in the *Piazza del Campo* and on the fourth day, after the so-called *provaccia* (final trial) of the morning, the famous *Palio* is run in the afternoon.

While the immense square is gradually filling with thousands of people from the city and neighboring county, the horse and jockey of each *contrada* or ward represented in the race receive the benediction. Then each *contrada* sends to Sant' Agostino Square its official representation, including a captain, pages, standard bearers, drummers, all wearing the old gorgeous costumes of the Commune. There meet the representations of all the *contrade*, now seventeen in number, and the parade is formed and moves toward the *Piazza del Campo*. First comes the standard bearer and after him the ten representatives of each *contrada* with their champion horse. Last comes the sumptuous chariot of the *Palio* and the representations of the towns formerly included in the territory of Siena. When the defile is over, the paraders go to a special stand erected in front of the City Hall while the jockeys are led into the interior courtyard of the

building where they receive the *nerbo* (whip) and are afterwards taken with their horses under the canopy stretched below the jury stand.

The starting signal is given and the air suddenly echoes with shouts and expressions that no other crowd in the world can surpass in vividness, warmth, and originality. As the race progresses the tension increases.

*Coraggio, Lupa!*

*Dalli, Chiocciola!*

*Via, Pantera!*

*Su, via Oca!*

And the whips crack, the horses devour the track, and the people look on crazed with excitement. The race is over and the winner declared. Then a representative of the victorious *contrada* runs to the steeple of his church and rings out the victory to the quarter. Meanwhile the jockey is warmly embraced and brought triumphantly with the horse to the jury stand where he receives the *Palio*, the symbolical flag bearing the coat of arms of the city surmounted by the image of the Madonna of Provenzano for the *Palio* of July and that of the Assumption for the *Palio* of August, which is by far the more important of the two.

Then the crowd leaves the *Piazza* of the contest and the streets of the city resound with festal songs of victory and ironical refrains for those who have raced in vain. The merry-making is kept up until daybreak, when the representatives of the *contrada* that participated in the parade of the *Palio* go through the city to take a collection for the jockey.

The festivities continue practically unabated for many days and finally close with a great public banquet held in the evening in one of the principal streets of the victorious quarter. The tables are spread over the whole length of the street and everyone is expected to pay his quota of the expenses. The civil authorities are always present, but the place of honor is reserved for the jockey and for the winning horse, which invariably stands near him. The revelry is protracted until the early hours of the morning and then the last ceremony of the feast, the distribution of the *Palio* takes place. The plate that is at the top of the flag is brought to the Mayor of the city who puts in it the

amount of money promised to the *contrada* that wins the *Palio*. The drapery is given to the *contrada* and is kept as a precious souvenir. The pole and the lance that hold the cloth are given to the captain and the two large white and black ribbons representing the colors of the coat of arms of Siena and surmounting the *Palio* are given to the two *mangini*, a kind of secret-service men employed principally to foil any attempt at bribing the jockey.

#### THE FEAST OF THE REDENTORE AT VENICE

On the Saturday night preceding the third Sunday in July Venice offers one of the most unique and striking spectacles. Special trains have brought to the city of the lagoons visitors from all parts of Italy, and the canals, the narrow streets, the bridges, the private residences are astir everywhere. Towards evening the gondolas swarm the Giudecca all aglow with lights and echoing with music. The great *galleggiante* (kind of barge) of the Commune with the city band aboard is surrounded by countless luminous gondolas, each adding a note to the mighty concert of instruments and voices.

Meanwhile the basin of San Marco is truly a phantasmagoria of light and the buildings of the magnificent square loom up imposingly amid the fantastic effect of the fireworks. Those who are not in the canals dance in the hidden crossways, in the dark alleys, along the seashores, on the monumental bridges.

What a joy on the night of the Redentore in Venice! No popular feast will ever have a more suggestive setting than this which the poets of all countries have made immortal in song.

Now, through a modern amplification of the ancient feast, which was first inaugurated after the visitation of the pestilence of 1577 upon the city, and which was to mark a periodical return of joy on the anniversary of the end of the plague, all those who have not prepared the traditional supper in the gondolas go to the *Lido*, the famous resort of the city but a short distance from San Marco.

The merry-making continues until late in the night and dawn finds all the canals deserted since everyone is waiting the sunrise upon the poetical shores of the *Lido*. When the rutilant disc

emerges majestically from the waters of the Adriatic the religious feast of the Redentore begins and the air resounds with the plaintive and solemn hymn of near and distant chimes. The Church of the Redentore opens its great portal and above it is raised a symbolic festoon of fresh and fancy fruit gathered during the season. It represents the gift of the earth to man, and man in turn offers it to the Creator.

Late in the evening every sign of the past revelry disappears and the *Queen of the Seas* regains the somnolent and royal peace of the night.

#### THE FEAST OF PIEDIGROTTA AT NAPLES

The traditional Neapolitan feast of *Piedigrotta* is the most popular in character and is deservedly famous on account of the *canzonette*, or popular airs, which, translated and spread all over the world, give us an adequate idea of the musical nature of the Neapolitans, soft, warm, and melodious.

Lately the genial spontaneity of this September feast has been troubled by the commercial invasion of German musical firms, which engage poets and musicians and buy the product of their simple art in advance. And yet, in spite of this, how much gaiety and animation on the evening of September 8th around the grottoes of *Posillipo*! The picturesque vehicles of the singers move toward the Church of the Madonna at *Piedigrotta* and the whole street, harmoniously illuminated, is filled with a joyous and cheering crowd.

Every singer, dressed in the characteristic Neapolitan style, playing his own accompaniment, sings the new *canzonetta* while those around him listen attentively trying to learn it. Then many voices repeat it and the air soon spreads to all quarters of the city. The *canzonetta* that wins the prize in the competition is the most popular of the year and it soon invades every town and city in Italy and later is heard in other countries also.

This charming feast had its origin in 1835 when the first real popular *canzonetta*, *Te voglio bene assaie* (I love you dearly), written by a certain Raffaele Sacco, was sung. This popular composer was a frequent visitor at some of the many gay cafés of the city, and one evening of that far September of 1835 he



announced the composition of a new *canzonetta*. A tenor of the *Teatro Nuovo* chanced to be present and the *canzonetta* was sung amid the enthusiasm of those present. At the last refrain a chorus from the street joined the singer. It was a crowd of people gathered under the windows attracted by the music and finally joining in the finale. There was a rush to the windows of the café, and poor Don Raffaele with tears in his eyes stammered words of thanks received with cries of *bene! bravo!*

The success was instantaneous and the *canzonetta* was sung everywhere the next morning. It was the beginning of an unbroken tradition. Since then, every year from the dreamy landscapes of Piedigrotta comes a new flow of grace and melody that charms all the civilized peoples of the world as an echo of the gentle and romantic poetry of Italy.

And how many other feasts there are and how beautiful the legends of the mountains, of the lakes, of the plains and of the sea! The highly poetic imagination of the people has created a legend for every lofty peak, for ever solitary crossing. The ruins of the old castles have their lugubrious and fantastic tales of enchantments and witchcraft. These may often appeal as purely sentimental and fearful extravaganzas of the past to those who are mainly concerned with cold historical documentation, but their deep significance is not lost to the many who, though living in an age of material pursuits, still find in them an inspiring message of beauty and delicate charm.

A. MARINONI.

University of Arkansas.

## ART FOR ART'S SAKE IN SOUTHERN LITERATURE

"Art for art's sake" presupposes spontaneity. The artist who creates literature for its own sake is impelled by some "fine frenzy within" to voice his thoughts or emotions. His art is expressive. He cares nothing for the effect of his work, save upon himself. He aims not to teach nor uplift nor point a moral. If he be a true artist, he employs a rare skill in making the form of his composition a perfect medium of expression, producing that subtle harmony between form and content which marks any piece of literature as artistic. Thus there are two conditions under which art for its own sake may appear in literature: the impelling motive must be for spontaneous expression; its creation must be attended by the deliberate, painstaking skill in the manipulation of materials which makes for art. In the fulfilment of the first condition, the early literature of the South surpassed that of the North and exhibited a fair promise of great things to come. In the neglect of the second condition lay its blight during long years. In its present fulfilment of both lies its hope for the future.

New England literature was from the first impressive rather than expressive. It consisted largely of ponderous, awe-inspiring sermons and lengthy, erudite tracts upon abstruse and solemn subjects. It was obviously literature with a purpose, appealing only to the intellect. Therein lay its weakness as literature. But in its concentration and earnestness, it sowed the seed of its future strength, for from it grew that wonderful industry in writing which later made New England the literary centre of the continent. Whenever the South adds the seriousness and industry of the North to its own spontaneity and inspiration, we may look for pure literature.

Out of the varying motives of the literature of the two sections—the impressiveness of the North and the expressiveness of the South—grew two resulting schools of literature. Inevitably the whole general trend of Northern literature has been toward realism, and just as certainly the literature of the South has from the beginning leaned toward the romantic. Nature

has assisted in bringing about this diversity. To the Puritan she exhibited her sterner self in a wild ruggedness of landscape and a bleak, rigorous climate. No wonder that we find little or no nature-worship in the earlier New England writings. It took years of adjustment to develop the Thoreau temperament which could look beyond her repellent exterior and find a heart of charm revealed in nature's harsher moods. The Virginian she wooed with all the wiles of her more alluring self, caressing him with a soft, genial atmosphere in a slumberous land of beautiful sunshiny luxuriance, and from the beginning his writings show his appreciation of nature. How perfectly their different settings seem to fit the varied temperaments of Puritan and Cavalier! One wonders what would have been the result in literature had the stern and righteous Puritan been submitted to the exotic, slumbersome charm of the Southland, and had the romantic, pleasure-loving Cavalier found himself face to face with the racking trials and discomforts of New England. Perhaps, under such conditions, inspiration and industry might have had an earlier meeting in our literature.

There is little of "art for art's sake" in true realism, for its purpose supersedes its inspiration—its ponderous aim annihilates spontaneous expression. That the temperament of the Cavaliers when submitted to the influence of Southern climate and scenery made for romance becomes evident in the very earliest Southern writings. It is significant that the first bit of literature which America produced was Captain John Smith's "True Relation of Virginia," and that this is a highly romantic piece of writing. Can one doubt the *romance* of his story of Pocahontas? There is, moreover, a romantic atmosphere about the entire work, even when it makes a pretension to historical fact, a something primitive and spontaneous—romantic in the self-expressive impulse which produced its narration of thrilling adventures and pictures of a new life in a new world. That his contemporaries felt the romantic charm of Smith's book is evident from the fact that it became the inspiration of a great many tales and plays—so many in fact that Smith was led to exclaim, "They have acted my fatal tragedies upon the stage and racked my relations at their pleasure." Can one imagine the

highly intellectual first writings of New England thus becoming the inspiration of narrators and playwrights?

There followed other Southern authors who wrote their experiences and impressions of the new world, and in the works of them all we find something of this romance, this inspiration and spontaneity that make for true art. Perhaps the most striking example of these elements is found in the work of William Strachey. One reads his vivid, impressive picture of a storm:—

“For four and twenty hours the storm, in a restless tumult, had blown so exceedingly, as we could not apprehend in our imaginations any possibility of greater violence, yet did we still find it, not only more terrible, but more constant, fury added to fury, and one storm urging a second, more outrageous than the former, whether it so wrought upon our fears, or indeed met with new forces. Sometimes strikes in our Ship amongst women, and passengers not used to such hurly and discomforts, made us look one upon the other with troubled hearts, and panting bosoms, our clamors drowned in the winds, in thunder. Prayers might well be in the hearts and lips, but drowned in the outsides of the officers,—nothing heard that could give comfort, nothing seen that might encourage hope.”

It is easy to believe that this work may have inspired Shakespeare to write his *Tempest*—that, from its effective and suggestive descriptions, the immortal bard caught the motive of what was to be his supreme artistic creation.

These very early Southern writers created literature accidentally in their efforts to set down facts and experiences. A little later the South was to give us in George Sandys our first writer of literature for its own sake. In his translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Sandys achieved a bit of pure literature which was destined to remain conspicuous for some decades to come, because it was the one product of early American letters which combined real inspiration with an execution that was artistic and methodical. Great would have been the flowering of Southern literature had his successors possessed his rare artistic ability, his great carefulness in the handling of his theme, his wonderful industry. The last is perhaps the most marvelous, when one remembers that he produced this work amid the many

demands of other occupations, stealing the hours of the night for its accomplishment;—another example of what industry in literature can add to the inspiration of the Southland.

Sandys's poem was a translation; but in the early literature of the South we can also find the first *original* poem of real literary merit. It is a little elegy on the death of Bacon found in the *Burwell Papers* and of unknown authorship, but so artistic, so truly inspired that it serves as one more example of the truth of my statement that early Southern writers were true artists—obscure prophets of better things to come.

"Death, why so cruel? What! no other way  
To manifest thy spleen, but thus to slay  
Our hopes of safety, liberty, our all,  
Which, through thy tyranny, with him must fall  
To its late chaos? . . . .

" . . . . Now we must complain,  
Since thou in him hast more than thousands slain,  
Whose lives and safeties did so much depend  
On him their life, with him their lives must end.

"Who now must heal those wounds or stop that blood  
The heathen made, and drew into a flood?  
Who is't must plead our cause? Nor trump, nor drum,  
Nor deputations; these, alas, are dumb,  
And cannot speak."

There followed for the South a long period of literary barrenness. During the same period in New England, industry, prosperity, community interests, and above all liberal education of the masses were uniting to produce a Northern literature which though not exactly pure literature, with art for its own sake as a motive, was nevertheless prolific, purposeful, and of varied merit. In the South the lack of community interests, the isolation of plantations, the neglect of education, and the general aversion to industry resulted in a dearth of literature. There were writers and a few of them were genuinely inspired, but they lacked that great essential—industry in literature, and taking up the pen in a desultory fashion, negligent of method and art, they produced a negligible literature. There was in the South for long years a queer prejudice against writing for money. Literature was an accomplishment when approached as a mere pastime, but it became a blot on the social escutcheon



when undertaken as a profession. There resulted nothing important nor epoch-making. As was natural, the only literary output of any recognizable excellence was of a lyric nature. Again spontaneity, the desire for self-expression gave rise to a few poems of artistic merit, for classic models had taught even the desultory poets to have a regard for form, and the inspiration of nature in her kindest moods gave a charming warmth and color to these songs. It is regrettable that there were so few of them.

Exceptions prove the rule, and it is significant that the exception in this case should be Edgar Allan Poe, Southern by birth and temperament—Northern by training. That he belonged to a period when Southern literature was at its worst, when its inspiration was feeble and its few writers approached it in a desultory manner, but that he nevertheless with true genius as a motive, with art for art's sake as an ideal, and with indefatigable industry as a means, raised himself to the very pinnacle of fame in American literature, proves the truth of my theory—that when the South adds to its own inspiration a truly artistic handling of materials, it produces a pure literature.

Unlike his Southern contemporaries, Poe devoted all his talents to literature. But truly Southern was his underlying conception of literature and especially of poetry—that "pleasure, not truth" was its object. However Northern his training, New England literature cannot claim him. He broke down its bars of purpose and truth in poetry, and preferred to roam in the green pastures of pleasure. But with it all, his devotion to the *art* of writing, his infinite care of detail, his groping for perfection of form was a ruling passion in all he wrote, both poetry and prose. The result has made him the most world-famous of all our writers. Swinburne has said of American literature, "Once as yet, and once only, has there sounded out of it all one pure note of original song—worth singing and echoed from the singing of no other man; a note of song neither wide nor deep but utterly true, rich, clear, and native to the singer; the short exquisite music, subtle and simple and sombre and sweet, of Edgar Poe." Thus Poe stands out as the supreme example of what art for art's sake can do for the literature of the South.

We note that Poe owed to the North his industry in literature. But the day has come when Southern writers are finding both inspiration and industry in their own Southland. It took the great upheaval of the Civil War to bring about this change in their attitude toward literature. In the decades preceding the war the North was in the midst of a great transcendental movement, its long period of industry of thought and deed was flowering into a wonderful literature that embodied its emotions and ideas. There was among men the divine discontent and inspired dissatisfaction that had been voiced by Carlyle and echoed by Emerson. But the South remained passive and contented, uttering its few charming melodies, until suddenly came the overwhelming shock of the war, sweeping away forever the past pleasant quiescence, shattering the old ideals, laying the land low under its horrors, but clearing the air for the inrush of new and invigorating ideas and the tonic force of industrialism. And with it came a new literature. At first, the new note of sincerity became evident in the poetry of Timrod and Hayne. The new regard for industry in art showed itself strikingly in Sidney Lanier, in whose works emotional sentiment and strength of purpose unite to produce a rare perfection. Gone is the desultory indifference of the old South when one of its poets, too weak to feed himself—dying—can utter a song like the following:—

“In my sleep I was fain of their fellowship, fain  
Of the live-oak, the marsh, and the main.  
The little green leaves would not let me alone in my sleep;  
Up-breathed from the marshes, a message of range and of sweep  
Interwoven with waftures and of wild sea-liberties, drifting,  
Came through the lapped leaves sifting, sifting,  
Came to the gates of sleep.  
Then my thoughts, in the dark of the dungeon-keep  
Of the Castle of Captives hid in the City of Sleep,  
Upstarted, by twos and by threes assembling:  
The gates of sleep fell a-trembling  
Like as the lips of a lady that forth falter yes,  
Shaken with happiness:  
The gates of sleep stood wide.”

Truly in Lanier *conscience* came into Southern literature.

In 1870, with the advent of industrialism into the South, began also industry in literature. There has arisen a generation of

authors who, like the earlier Southern writers, are finding their inspiration in their own surroundings. And to them literature has become a life-profession. They are earnest, serious, and sincere. They are true artists in their devotion to literature and the skill with which they are handling their chosen themes. They are giving a new and dominant tone to American letters. Gone is the apathy. Close at hand are various quaint and interesting people. The land glows with a verdant, inspiring beauty. Out of the past steal forth romantic figures of Cavaliers and soldiers. Grimly and overshadowing all stalks the epic spectre of the Civil War and "literature loves a lost cause." It seems safe to predict that America's purest literature is to come out of the Southland.

A. M. CONWAY.

Philadelphia, Pa.

## LOVE IN MEDIAEVAL ROMANCE

Now of wemen this I say for me,  
Of erthly thingis nane may bettir be ;  
They suld haif wirschep and grit honoring  
Off men, aboif all vthir erthly thing.

These words of the Scottish poet Dunbar, written at the close of the Middle Ages, express the cult of woman-worship which the chivalry of the Middle Ages had developed and which through the medium of romantic love in novel, poem, and romance has meant so much to the life of our own time. For however fundamental and unchanging the love of the sexes may be, there surely is no doubt that it is colored and even modified by ideals that are in the atmosphere, that its manner of expression in outward life is affected by them, and that poetry and story have really changed men's ways of thinking of love and even of loving. Of the various tendencies which combine in modern love-literature, mediæval chivalry is one of the most important, and I shall point out a few of the characteristics of chivalric love as revealed in the romances of the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries.

It is to France that we owe our greatest debt—France the centre of mediæval culture, combining many complex elements from Latin and Celtic and Germanic worlds in ways yet mysterious to the historian, evolving from these combinations new products and new types in literature and in thought, and passing them on to other countries, especially to England and Germany, to aid in the growth of culture there. This explanation is made so that the reader will understand that the romantic material with which I am dealing is international, with France as the centre, although I shall refer chiefly to the imitative literature of England.

It must be made clear first of all, however, that in mediæval literature there are as many ways of treating love as in modern literature, and that even in romantic literature there are great differences. The meaning of chivalric love will be somewhat plainer if the other types are explained. It should be borne in mind, moreover, that the writer does not claim a very close

relation between the type of love found in literature and the love in the actual life of the Middle Ages. Here we are dealing chiefly with love in literature, and references to life will be made to interpret so far as possible the literary material. Three distinct ways of treating love may be found, each of them strikingly interesting, and each of them belonging to a more or less distinct type of literature. I shall begin with the lower type of love and proceed to the higher rather than attempt the more difficult task of taking up the literary types in the doubtful order of their appearance.

First of all is the love of the *fabliau*. To the reader unfamiliar with mediæval literature it should be explained that the *fabliau* is an amusing story in metrical form, usually coarse in content, resembling not a little the anecdotes which form a staple part of the conversation of groups of men in the country store, in the harvest field during the rest period, and in a thousand other places where men find themselves in companies. This kind of vulgarity in the Middle Ages found its way into literature and furnished material for Boccaccio and Chaucer. In the *fabliau* woman is the daughter of Eve, the source of most of the mischief in the world, loquacious, meddling, faithless, sensual. Desire is the nearest approach to love. Many of the *fabliaux* are satirical, with a purpose more or less moral. According to them, to quote from Chauntecleer,—

In principio  
Mulier est hominis confusio.

The Host of the *Canterbury Tales* draws a characteristic moral after hearing the Merchant tell the *fabliau* of January and May:—

Lo, whiche sleighes and subtiltees  
In wommen been! for ay as bisy as bees  
Been they us sely men for to deceyve.

In the tale of *The Dumb Wife*, in which a dumb woman gains the power of speech at the desire of her husband, is one of the mildest of the jests characteristic of the *fabliau*:—

The leist deuill that is in hell  
Can gif ane wyf his toung;  
The grittest, I you tell,  
Cannot do mak hir dum.



In the *fabliau*, then, we have the lowest possible type of love—sensuality mingled with contempt.

As we shall see farther on, chivalric love owes a great deal to the church. Strangely enough, the *fabliau* attitude toward women also received a great deal of encouragement from the ascetic element in Mediæval Catholicism, which distrusted women and held them to be the main source of all evil. Mediæval ecclesiastical writers who saw no kinship between human and divine love and were acquainted with the evil physical consequences of violent passion even went so far as to regard love of woman as a disease. To a certain extent Oriental contempt for women may be another influence, since some of the stories satirizing women (in the *Seven Sages*, for instance) are certainly Oriental. But the supposition that all *fabliaux* came from India or other parts of the Orient seems effectually disproved. Historically, of course, asceticism owes a great deal to the East, and tendencies to scorn the weaker sex no doubt received encouragement from the Orient in various ways, but the *fabliau* attitude is too nearly universal to be regarded as either Oriental or Occidental. However, the character of the *fabliau* owes a great deal to the audience which listened to them. They were primarily masculine and *bourgeois*. No doubt many knights in hours of relaxation were entertained by the stories of the *bourgeois* classes, for the differences in culture were not necessarily very great; but the *fabliau* was not recognized as a literary form of any dignity, and it was not meant to appeal to the courtly classes.

A brief statement of the content of one of the most famous of the *fabliaux*—the *Lai d'Aristote*—will emphasize these characteristics. Alexander of Greece, after subjugating India, neglected to pursue his conquests because of his love for a beautiful captive. Aristotle, his teacher, a bald old philosopher, reproved him, and the king promised amendment. But the mistress noticed the sadness in the king's manner, and extracted from him the secret of it. She vowed vengeance on the old philosopher. At dawn she placed Alexander before a window in a tower overlooking the garden. A seductive song touched the master's heart and brought him to the coquettishly attired

young lady, whom he addressed in the conventional language of the mediæval lover, offering for her service body and soul, life and honor. She asked him to comply with one of her whims, and Aristotle readily consented. The old philosopher was saddled and bridled like a horse, and the young lady mounted him. At this critical moment Alexander made himself visible. In an instant the teacher perceived the trick.

"Sire," he said, "was I not right in fearing the effects of love upon you, who are in the bloom of youth, since it has thus accoutred me, who am old? I have joined example to precept."

As has been indicated, the *fabliau* is pretty distinct from romance, though the distinction is not always strictly observed. The second type of love is found in a literary form which may with justice be regarded as romantic, though it is a distinct type of romance and has some of the qualities of the epic, and in French literature, but not in English, is usually regarded as a literary species. This is the *chanson de geste*, the literary species of which the *Song of Roland* is the most distinguished representative. As the name indicates, it is concerned with deeds; it is historical or pseudo-historical, and in its typical form is concerned with the family of Charlemagne, their vassals, and their enemies. As in the case of the *Song of Roland*, these poems often deal with the relations of Christendom to the Saracens. In date they are generally earlier than the pure romances, though the two literary forms exist side by side for a considerable period. War is always of great importance,—not the adventures of single knights so much as those of great armies. Whatever the origin of these *chansons de geste* (a problem not yet solved), it is clear that they represent a fairly simple and primitive mind, that they are intended neither for a courtly society nor for a very humble or even *bourgeois* society, and that they are primarily for men.

In the *chanson de geste* women are almost always in the background; but love becomes increasingly important—often love between a Christian knight and a Saracen maiden. In these romances, both in French and in English, love is curiously conventionalized, in a way that is very distant from any normal condition in actual life. The love is extremely

passionate, irresistible, animal, but also sometimes noble, and usually not degrading. However, the extraordinary feature of this type of love is that the woman woos. This fact does not imply any superiority on the part of woman; rather the contrary, for the knight is sometimes as disdainful, at first, as is the lady of chivalric romance. Although it is perhaps not unnatural for the Christian writer to attribute unwomanly boldness to Saracen women, he apparently gives it his approval by awarding success to her love when she consents to become a Christian in order to possess her lover. Moreover, she becomes, usually, an exemplary and even heroic wife. Orable, the wife of William of Orange, appearing in several *chansons de geste* dealing with that hero, is one of these overbold maidens, but as a wife she is the most attractive, most faithful, and most heroic woman in the whole range of Charlemagne literature and one of the finest women in all mediæval literature. In explaining this type of literature I shall take two examples, both in English romances which have French analogues.

The first is from *Beves of Hamtoun*. Sir Beves, after a narrow escape from death at the hands of mother and stepfather, was sold as slave to the Saracen king of Ermonie. The king had a daughter, Josian, who learned to love the attractive stranger. After a battle in which Beves saved her from a forced marriage, she entertained him in her chamber. This opportunity she used to speak of her love in very gross language. But Beves bluntly refused her proposals, and as a consequence was cursed roundly. He resented her language, declared his intention to go to another country, and took lodging for the night away from the palace in the town. There he was visited first by the chamberlain of the princess and then by the princess herself. When Beves heard Josian, he pretended to be asleep.

"Awake, dear one," she called, "awake. I am come to make peace."

"Damsel," replied Beves, "go away and leave me. I have fought for you, and will do nothing more."

Josian fell down and wept sorely.

"Mercy," she cried. "Men say that a woman's bolt is soon shot. If you will forgive me for what I did, I will forsake my false gods for Christianity."

"In that case," quoth the knight, "I grant it, my sweet one."

Whereupon he kissed her in token of the agreement.

It is characteristic of the *chanson de geste* type that conversion because of a very physical passion is just as efficacious as conversion because of religious conviction. Consequently, Josian was an ideally faithful wife and Christian from that moment.

In *Beves* the feminine approach is somewhat grosser than it is possible to make appear in a summary. In the second example, however,—from *Sir Ferumbras*—no summary can conceal the underlying brutality. In a battle with the Saracens, Oliver the famous friend of the more famous Roland, with a few French knights, were taken prisoner. By the orders of the emir, Balan, they were bound, thrown into prison, and left without food. Floripas, daughter of the emir, hearing their cries, went to learn the cause. Having learned that one of the Christian knights was very handsome, she demanded permission to speak with them. The jailer refused. The maiden then attempted to force the prison door, and the jailer, resisting, had his brains knocked out by the determined lady. She then released the prisoners and concealed them in her chamber on the condition that they should help her to marry Guy of Burgundy, whom she had once seen and had since loved.

Soon messengers came from Charlemagne to the emir to demand the release of the prisoners. The messengers were seized by the enraged emir, but Floripas succeeded in taking them also to her chamber. Among the new prisoners were Roland and Guy of Burgundy. When the lady jailer made known her wishes, Roland suggested that Guy take the maiden. But Guy declined to do so before he had the assent of King Charles. When the maiden understood, she went almost mad with rage, and swore by Mahomet that unless Guy took her as his wife all of them should hang. This vigorous persuasion was successful. Floripas and Guy were betrothed, and the Saracen maiden announced her readiness to be baptized. In the war between the emir and the Christians which followed, Floripas aided her new friends energetically. The emir was captured, at last, and the Christians, including Ferumbras, the emir's son and the brother of

Floripas, endeavored to gain his consent to baptism—all except Floripas, who took little interest in these attempts at conversion, declaring that they would fail. To Charlemagne she said: "Sir Emperor, you do wrong in delaying for his sake. You had done well to slay him last night when he was taken." And slain he was, whereupon Floripas joyfully married her lover.

The fact that women of this type are not exceptional, but are conventional in a literature of wide range, while it probably indicates little as to actual practices, throws an interesting light on the tastes of mediæval audiences. In English romances of the most popular type they exist well through the Middle Ages. Appearing in a literature almost contemporary with chivalric romances, the love elements stand a world removed. As indicated, the explanation must be in the primitive nature of the material which produced the type, the crudeness of the hearers who listened to them as they fell from the lips of the wandering minstrel, and the tendency of a literary convention, once established, to maintain itself without apparent justification.

The third type of love, the chivalric, embraces several varieties, but all of them agree in placing woman upon a pedestal. No longer is she a daughter of Eve, the cause of the evil in men's hearts. Now she is a sister of Mary, object of man's highest aspiration, and the best earthly symbol of divine love. The contrast with the love of the *fabliau* and the *chanson de geste* is startling, but there is a partial explanation at hand. With the advance of the Middle Ages, wealth increased, a tendency to display developed, and with wealth and display came luxury. The court became the centre of a certain culture; there was leisure and the desire for entertainment; princes could afford to employ others to entertain; and the court poets and minstrels became important in consequence. But it was not the prince, usually more or less concerned with the problem of self-preservation or of aggrandizement, who had real leisure; it was the wife. Without the means of intercourse which brings equals of every rank together in later society, she interested herself in the entertainment of the court, became the centre of



the life of the entertainers, and their mistress. The natural result of this association between refined women and refined men of lower rank than the women was a feminized literature—a literature for women, adapted to the emotions of women, and consequently idealizing women. Many other elements, some of which we shall notice, enter into this new attitude, but the general social situation indicated must have been fundamental.

First of all I shall discuss briefly an aspect of the subject which is important, indeed, but which is so well known that I desire to emphasize other aspects that have not been so clearly and emphatically stated. Mediæval romantic love became, in its ideal relation, an affair between a married woman and an unmarried man. The reason for this fact has often been stated as lying in the social situation already indicated. Husbands were not chosen, as a rule, because love sprang up between knight and maiden, but for political reasons. Was it not to be expected that the wife who had been sacrificed for the welfare of family should seek the love of men other than her husband, especially since, as a wife, she had gained a liberty and an authority unknown in the parental home? This reason was unquestionably present, but it was not the only reason. The whole tendency of mediæval thought and feeling encouraged this kind of love, and it was a natural outgrowth of a chivalrous attitude toward women. The central institution of the Middle Ages was the church, and the church, with all its practical power, rested on the theory that this world is secondary and unreal, that it is in some sense a symbol of another world which is the supreme reality. The theory permeated mediæval life in various directions, and it profoundly affected the love of the sexes.

The existence of an influence in the opposite direction—that is, from the secular to the religious—is of course well known. Mystical love of the divine, of Jesus or of Mary, often had the mode of expression and even the quality of sexual love. Catherine of Siena was betrothed to the Lord with ring and vow. Suso, in petitioning Our Lady, imitated the wooing of Suabian young men. The passion of the mediæval female mystic for Christ often strangely resembles human love, Christ the lover to

whom the woman yields herself. The symbolism of union with the divine is at times very realistic. The following passage from the well-known "Wooing of our Lord"—a prayer written for the use of a woman, probably a nun—is typical: "Jesus, sweet Jesu, thus thou foughtest for me against thy soul's foes; thou didst settle the contest for me with thy body, and madest of me, wretch, thy beloved and spouse. Thou hast brought me from the world into the bower of thy birth, enclosed me in thy chamber where I may so sweetly kiss and embrace thee, and of thy love have spiritual delight." To what extent this passion is a transformed human passion it is hard to say. A recent writer on mysticism, denying the identity of the human with the divine passion, at the same time clearly indicates the character of the resemblance. "The mystic's outlook . . . is the lover's outlook. It has the same element of wildness, the same quality of selfless and quixotic devotion, the same combination of rapture and humility. This parallel is more than a pretty fancy: for mystic and lover, upon different planes, are alike responding to the call of the Spirit of Life. The language of human passion is tepid and insignificant beside the language in which mystics try to tell the splendours of their true love. They force upon the unprejudiced reader the conviction that they are dealing with an ardour far more burning for an object far more real."<sup>1</sup> Now this parallelism between mystical love of God and sexual love is universal. But is it without significance that the parallelism is most marked in chivalric love, developing at a period when mysticism had a powerful hold on the church and the world? That is, may not the human passion have borrowed from the divine?

Take the love of Dante, for instance,—a love thoroughly typical of the age of chivalry and the courts of love. After his meeting with Beatrice when he was about nine years old, she immediately became the centre of his life, not only while she lived but, it is supposed, as long as the poet lived. There is no indication that he ever thought of marrying her. Yet he sought opportunities to see her for his soul's nourishment, and she be-

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<sup>1</sup> Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism* (New York, 1911,) pp. 106 f.

came the symbol of love and finally of divine faith. It is usually believed that this is a human love, and a very real human experience. Yet the emotions described are not distinguishable from the emotions of the mystic yearning for God.

Beyond the sphere which spreads to widest space  
Now soars the sigh that my heart sends above;  
A new perception born of grieving Love  
Guideth it upward the untrodden ways.  
When it hath reached unto the end, and stays,  
It sees a lady round whom splendors move  
In homage; till, by the great light thereof  
Abashed, the pilgrim spirit stands at gaze.  
It sees her such, that when it tells me this  
Which it hath seen, I understand it not,  
It hath a speech so subtile and so fine.  
And yet I know its voice within my thought  
Often remembereth me of Beatrice:  
So that I understand it, ladies mine.<sup>3</sup>

In the case of Dante it can scarcely be doubted that the human love, in becoming the symbol of divine love, undergoes some changes in quality, and this change in quality enters more or less into the character of all chivalric love.

In this connection it is perhaps not without significance that in allegorizing human love, mediæval love goes to the church for some of its most important symbols. The most conventional of all the symbols is the mediæval court of love, with a castle for location, and the procedure more or less legal in character. In the court of love poetry, the judge is sometimes an actual sovereign—for example, Marie of Champagne—who decides some delicate point of love which is argued before her, as, for instance, whether there could be true love between husband and wife, which Marie of Champagne was said to have decided in the negative. This legal procedure becomes sometimes more or less religious or ecclesiastical. A temple takes the place of the castle; an altar replaces the throne; prayers are uttered, incense burned, and offerings made. Of course the classical cult of Venus was influential in this secular poetry, but as a matter of fact the manner of worship was essentially the same as for the Virgin Mary. The lady who was the object of worship was

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<sup>3</sup> From Rossetti's translation of *The New Life*.

adored in the same religious phraseology very often. Andrew the Chaplain tells of a Paradiso, a Purgatorio, and an Inferno of lovers; there are love-visions evidently modeled on the visions of ecclesiastical literature; there are confessions, paternosters, credos, masses, pilgrimages, even a cloister of love, all revealing the close relation of religious and the secular modes of interpreting and expressing love.<sup>3</sup>

A question already mentioned is of the greatest importance—that is, To what extent does the human love of the romances actually partake of the qualities of divine love? Anything like a complete answer is of course impossible. The necessity of humility and absolute submission on the part of the lover to one who is above law has already been suggested. When Lancelot, pursuing Guinevere and a treacherous knight who had forcibly abducted her, hesitated for a moment to perform an action regarded as degrading to a knight—mounting a cart with a churl—even the rescue of the queen did not save him from reproach and estrangement. On another occasion a word from the queen caused Lancelot to allow inferior knights to get the better of him. When Ivain forgot to return to his Laudine by the appointed day, he was punished by years of separation and madness. When Lanval mentioned his happy love for a fairy mistress, against her desire, he immediately suffered loss of her love and great danger of death. In the last case the superiority of the lady may seem to lie in the fact that she is queen in an “other-world,” but the attitude is the same in the case of mistresses in “this world.” Disobedience to the deity is punished scarcely more severely.

Another point in which chivalrous love resembles mystical love is that ideally it is a pursuit of something unattainable,—

“The desire of the moth for the star,  
Of the night for the morrow,  
The devotion to something afar  
From the sphere of our sorrow.”

It is this quality which gives charm to the love of Dante, of Petrarch, and of many a troubadour for his mistress. Marriage

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<sup>3</sup>This point is discussed in Neilson's *The Origins and Sources of the Court of Love* and in Dodd's *Courtly Love in Chaucer and Gower*.

means attainment and the death of love. Therefore the best love is the love for one who is most nearly unattainable—the wife of another. Of course the ideal breaks down, and indirectly leads to immorality, but it is not without elevation and charm. The emotion, instead of leading to pursuit and conquest, leads to sympathy and help for all womankind, a dauntless, if quixotic, courage on the battlefield, and a refinement of the whole nature of the lover. Even in the case of Lancelot, love has this quality of longing which cannot be satisfied, and this is transformed into great deeds. In Ector's last tribute to his brother, it is love which is made the central fact of his character:—

“Thou, Sir Launcelot, there thou liest; . . . thou were the courtliest knight that ever bore shield; and thou were the truest friend to thy lover that ever bestrode horse; and thou were the truest lover of a sinful man that ever loved woman; . . . and thou were the meekest man and gentlest that ever sat in hall among ladies; and thou were the sternest knight to thy mortal foe that ever put spear in the rest.”

The mystical, contemplative quality of sexual love, making it resemble love of the divine, is perhaps the most striking evidence of relation between the two. In some cases this contemplation meant only a fixed concentration of the mind on divine things. Similar contemplation on the part of lovers is to be expected. But sometimes contemplation meant being rapt into an ecstasy which shut out the realization of ordinary events. Even this kind of contemplation is not absent from the romances. Passages relating to two of the greatest of the Arthurian heroes will perhaps be sufficient to make the point clear. But first, as an example of divine contemplation, take the following from Bonaventura's *Life of St. Francis*:—

“Toward the Sacrament of the Lord's Body he felt a glowing devotion that consumed the very marrow of his bones, marvelling with utmost amazement at that most loving condescension and condescending love. Oft did he communicate, and so devoutly as to render others devout, while, as he tasted of the sweetness of that Lamb without spot, he became like one inebriated in spirit and rapt out of himself in ecstasy.”



The first example of the ecstasy of human love which has this trance-like quality is in *Lancelot of the Laik*. Lancelot, just released from prison, went to the battle between the forces of Arthur and those of Galiot clad in red armor and mounted on a red horse. From the sides of the river where he halted he beheld Queen Guinevere watching the scene from a parapet. When the battle began, the red knight sat motionless on his steed, buried in the thought of his unfortunate love. A herald came, seized his bridle, and cried, "Awake! It is no time to sleep." But Lancelot did not reply, "so pricked him the smart of heaviness that stood unto his heart." Then came two discourteous men, of whom one took his shield from his neck, and the other threw water into the ventail. The cold water caused him to wink, and he aroused himself for the conquest.

The second example is taken from a romance of Chrétien de Troyes. One snowy morning Perceval, having risen early, saw a falcon strike a bird, wounding it. When he had ridden to the spot, he saw on the white snow three drops of blood. Leaning on his lance, he gazed on the dots of red, which reminded him how the red lay on the white in his beloved's face. The morning passed, but the knight did not move. Finally some squires of Arthur's retinue, which was encamped near by, noticed him and called the attention of the king. Arthur bade one of his knights bring the stranger to him. But Perceval did not heed the messenger's greeting. The knight, angered, charged the motionless stranger, shouting to him to defend himself. Perceval was aroused in time to throw the discourteous knight to the ground. Then Kay went to bring the stranger, who was again lost in his reverie, called to him roughly, and was punished even more severely than the first knight. Perceval immediately returned to the spots of blood, over which he leaned on his lance as he gazed, utterly heedless of his wounded opponent. Finally Gawain undertook the dangerous task. When he arrived at the spot where Perceval was leaning on his lance, two of the drops had been dissolved by the sun and the third was diminishing. Consequently the dreamer responded immediately to Gawain's courteous greeting: "Here were two, who would have forced me away, while I was taken up with a thought that gave me

delight; they who wished to rob me found not their gain; here were three drops of blood that adorned the white snow; as I gazed, it seemed to me I beheld the fresh color on the face of my fair friend."

This mystical, worshiping, contemplative love had its source in part, no doubt, in the social circumstances already mentioned; and because of a more quickly developing culture and perhaps of warmer blood, or even perhaps of contact with Arabian literature, it arose first in southern France, whence it spread to northern France, England, Italy, and Germany. But besides the social conditions, there are three cultural elements which enter into mediæval chivalric love as it has been preserved in the romances.

The tendency to an idealistic, fanciful love which social conditions encouraged found ample and adaptable material in Celtic story. The French came in contact with the Celts both in England and in Brittany, and the result of this contact was the infusion of a great mass of Celtic story into French literature. Coming first in the form of short narrative poems, its influence spread until almost all romance was colored by it, and the Arthurian legend, with its boundless wealth of story and elusive charm, was fully developed. Celtic stories were strangely fantastic, fanciful, remote; they were full of the supernatural, making communication between this world and other worlds easy, and recognizing love relations between mortals and fairies. They were full of color, of action, of magic, of weirdness, and of poetic charm. Of course they were pagan.

In spite of the fact that the church was not always friendly to this Arthurian material, in one respect this importation was too nearly akin to mediæval ideals not to be of literary use. In a world which believed so intensely in an unseen reality more real than the visible world, and which recognized influences from one to the other to be frequent and potent in affairs, the easy communication of mortal and immortal in Celtic fairy-lore furnished the best of material for religious elaboration. The consequence was the development of the legends of Perceval, Galahad, and the Grail, full of strange, Celtic, yet Christian yearning and beauty; the ideal lover of woman became the

ideal lover of good; and the quester for the sake of a beloved mistress became the loyal quester for a romantic, ideal goal, the essence of which was probably a religious emotion, for the sake of God.

In a precisely parallel manner Celtic lore contributed to the literature of mediæval love. The love which found in woman the goal of a strange, mystical, hopeless yearning found nourishment in the lore which showed best how the remote could be vested with the greatest mystical charm. It furnished material in the stories of the strange, dangerous, and ever-fascinating love of mortal for immortal, with which to picture ideally the love of mortal for mortal, and consequently the great mediæval love stories, rising to the loves of Tristram and Iseult, of Lancelot and Guinevere, are Celtic in origin.

Another element, not less potent, probably, was Platonism. Platonic influence has been so much associated with the Renaissance that we sometimes forget that it was very powerful through the entire Middle Ages. Not directly, of course; but indirectly through Neo-Platonism, the church fathers, the early mediæval philosophers, and the earlier and later mystics. In the early Middle Ages, in fact, it was the Platonic, not the Aristotelian, strain of culture which prevailed. And long after the Aristotelian philosophers had replaced the Platonic, the influence of Platonism and its Neo-Platonic offspring was evident in the spiritual life of the intelligent world. The universality of the influence of *The Consolation of Philosophy* of Boethius would alone go far toward accounting for the continued vogue of this mystical philosophy; and Dionysius the Areopagite, St. Augustine, Scotus Erigena, and many others also carried on the tradition. Platonism reinforced the tendency of the Middle Ages to regard the unseen as of supreme importance in comparison with the world of sense. To put the meaning of mediæval Platonism as simply as possible, it was that whatever of good there is in the world is good because it partakes of divine good; that whatever there is of evil is evil because it lacks this divine character, that is, is purely earthly. Thus, as brought out by Plato himself and the Platonists of the Renaissance, earthly beauty is a kind of reflection of the divine or perfect beauty, and love of earthly beauty in woman may be

an education which will enable the lover eventually to see beyond the earthly to the divine and perfect beauty.<sup>4</sup>

But more important than any theory of relation between human and divine love was the character of the love of the divine. For the divine perfection could be known truly only by mystic contemplation and love. As we have already seen, this love of the unseen, imaginatively realized in Christ or Mary or some one of the saints, assumed the character of human love of the higher type. The two kinds of love being thus related in quality, it is not strange that love of woman should assume, in literature at least, something of the quality which seems peculiar to love of the divine. The lady becomes a being to be worshipped. The lover does not *realise* her human imperfections; she seems rather a perfect being created by love and meaningless apart from love. She becomes real only by falling below the ideal of this love, as does Guinevere. But in chivalric love at its best the physical element is absolutely subject to the spiritual. Platonism has evidently contributed to this ethereal human love as it has contributed to many other elements of mediæval life. This statement, of course, does not imply that the writers of romance were conscious Platonists.

The third element to which I referred cannot be separated entirely from the second, to which and to related tendencies it owes its existence. I mean the cult of the Virgin Mary. The adoration of the Virgin owed something in turn to chivalric love, but the greater debt, if dates are an indication, was the other way. Just as chivalric love elevated its object toward the divine, so mystical love brought the divine down more nearly to the human in the woman Mary. The universality of this worship, combined with the remarkable parallelism in the symbolism of

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<sup>4</sup>J. B. Fletcher's *Religion of Beauty in Woman* analyzes thoroughly Platonic love in the period of the Renaissance. While there is little Platonic theory of love in the Middle Ages, there is a good deal of Platonic feeling—in literature at least; so that the Renaissance does not represent an entirely new attitude toward woman. Therefore Mr. Fletcher's statement that "the Middle Ages, the age of Aristotle, had called woman *confusio hominis*, the 'confusion of man'"; while "the Renaissance, the age of Plato, now hailed her in effect as *illuminatio Dei*, 'the illumination of God,'" cannot be regarded as absolutely accurate.

human and divine love as revealed in the love-literature, compels us to believe that the influence on chivalric love was vital. Every beloved woman, to the truly chivalrous lover, had something of the Mary in her—her beauty, her calm perfection, her unapproachableness, and, less frequently, her kindness.

But the mistress of mediæval romance is not always kind, even to the perfect lover; and this fact suggests another element, important, but not distinctive enough to be classed with those already discussed. The Middle Ages inherited classical mythology; they knew Ovid. Haughty Venus and capricious Cupid are everywhere in mediæval literature, and the stream of tendency which they embody or represent entered into chivalric romance, contributing to the perversity of the mistress and encouraging less elevated emotions to become part of chivalric love. The Ovidian tradition, like Neo-Platonism, powerfully affected love allegory. The Platonic and Ovidian elements may be found together, but usually more or less hostile, through the Middle Ages. The Ovidian element, however, is less characteristic.

As stated, chivalric love developed out of mediæval conditions, but love to-day has probably been more profoundly influenced by chivalric ideals than was the love of man and woman in the days of chivalry. The age of chivalry has by no means perpetuated itself; we belong to a period which prides itself on seeing things as they are, and chivalry does not aid us in doing this. Yet in an age of realism the romantic quest is still a vital part of the lives of many men. The love of man for woman is still a quest for an unattainable and ideal end. Its chief beauty depends on this fact. And the nature of this quest has nowhere been presented more clearly than in mediæval romance.

H. L. CREEK.

University of Illinois.



## MORALS OF THE RESTORATION

The averted face of the public seems to be turning for the present to Restoration comedy. Professor Nettleton's *English Drama of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century* devotes to it some three or four chapters, in which he boldly stands up and says to all the world, "This is a native English product." Mr. John Palmer is bolder still. In his study entitled *The Comedy of Manners* he stoutly maintains that the leading Restoration comedy writers were not only English but the most moral writers of their time. And he proves it to his own glee by declaring that all their immorality was the clear and unsullied reflection of the ideals that governed their associates,—a faithful transcript can never be immoral. To him Wycherley's *Country Wife* is "the most perfect farce in English dramatic literature." To Professor Nettleton it reveals "the depth of his [Wycherley's] moral degradation." That these two students agree in the opinion that the comedies of that generation represented the tastes and the conditions of the courtly circle and its would-be imitators is significant. That they take divergent and indeed opposite views of the morality of the period indicates some misapprehension of the purposes of those writers of comedy and of their attitude toward the life about them.

### I

Yet all authorities agree that the peculiar distinction of Wycherley and Congreve is the brilliancy of their wit. Everyone quotes the words of Hazlitt praising Congreve's style as "the highest model of comic dialogue." Evelyn at the time pointed out the superiority of Wycherley's wit:—

As long as men are false and women vain,  
Whilst gold continues to be virtue's bane,  
In pointed satire Wycherley shall reign.

In 1675 Rochester wrote of Sir George Etheredge:—

Now Apollo had got gentle George in his eye,  
And frankly confessed that, of all men that writ,  
There's none had more facy, sense, judgment, and wit.

But the significant feature of these men's lives was the part that wit played in securing them social recognition. A few paradoxes were a passport to the most exclusive circles. The curious antiquarian, Oldys, records of Etheredge's first play: "The fame of this play with his lively humor, engaging conversation, and refined taste in the fashionable gallantries of the town soon established him in the societies and rendered him the delight of those leading wits among the quality and gentry of chief rank and distinction, who made their pleasure the chief business of their lives in that reign." Dennis tells the significant, familiar story of how the success of *Love in a Wood* brought Wycherley the acquaintance of the notorious Duchess of Cleveland. He further relates, what is not so familiar, that his wit won him also the friendship of her relative, the Duke of Buckingham, who was so charmed that he exclaimed, "'By G—, my cousin is in the right of it'; and from that moment made a friend of a man whom he believed to be his happy rival." Major Pack specifically avers that "King Charles was extremely fond of him upon account of his wit."

Wit was a passport because it was the coveted attainment of every member of the courtly circle that surrounded the king. The old gossip Spence has preserved an anecdote of Buckingham which takes us back to that era. One afternoon in the theatre, while the heroic play was sloping to its decline, an actress in one of Dryden's productions spoke the line,—

"My wound is great, because it is so small,"—

and then paused as if in distress. The duke rose at once from his seat in a box and added in a loud ridiculing voice,—

"Then 'twould be greater were it none at all!"

So keen was the delight of the audience in wit that it "hissed the poor woman off the stage; and would never bear her appearance in the rest of her part." The Earl of Rochester was admired because "he had a strange vivacity of thought, and vigour of expression: his Wit had a subtilty and sublimity both, that were scarce imitable. When he used Figures they were very lively, and yet far enough out of the Common Road." The

tolerant Bishop Burnet was told that the earl was so extravagantly pleasant when inflamed with wine that many, to be the more diverted by his humor, engaged him deeper in intemperance. Shadwell, in casting about for the most flattering compliment to pay to Sir Charles Sedley in a dedication, wrote: "My greatest satisfaction is that I have the honor of his friendship, and my comedies have had his approbation, whom I have heard speak more wit at a supper, than all my adversaries, with their heads joined together, can write in a year." In his minute and unfaltering faithfulness Shadwell records through one of his characters that "wit is a common idol, that every coxcomb worships in his heart, though some blockheads of business dissemble it." His ladies demand that their lovers be "all wit, all gaiety."

Now it is well to note that these leaders of Restoration society did not form their ideals of conversation from English precedents. Rochester spent part of his youth in Italy. He told Burnet that his studies had been chiefly in "the Comical and witty Writings of the Ancients and Moderns," "the Modern French and Italian as well as the English." Buckingham, before he was seventeen, had lived in Florence and Rome in as great state as the native princes, and subsequently spent several years at Paris in the vicinity of the *Palais Royale*. It is the opinion of Mr. Palmer that "for Etherege French was his native idiom. His perfect knowledge of French manners, the French books of his library, his minute acquaintance with contemporary public characters of Paris, show that much of his early life had been spent in France." It is equally well known that Wycherley passed the most impressionable years of his youth, from fifteen to twenty, in the circle of Madame de Montausier, more famous under her maiden name of Julie de Rambouillet.

The Hôtel de Rambouillet is forever associated with the cult of preciosity, which was made to contribute to the gayety of nations by Molière in his brilliant innovation, *Les Précieuses Ridicules*. He returned to the attack many times and helped to drive that affectation from courtly circles; but in its day it was a *sine qua non* for elegant society. It was in fact a European movement during the first half of the seventeenth century. In the Italy which Buckingham and Rochester visited it was familiar in the

form now termed *secentismo*. There are some very instructive passages in the life of Marino, the poet of *secentismo*. On his return from Paris he was escorted into his native city of Naples through an arch of triumph, accompanied by shouting throngs of his fellow-citizens, who at once made him president of their academy. Etheredge was more than familiar with the worship of *bel esprit* among the fashionable *salons* of Paris. Everywhere the cult was characterized by a search for unexpected antitheses, striking paradoxes, and subtle or surprising comparisons. The change wrought in English conversation by the introduction at the Restoration of the worship of wit prevalent abroad was observed by Dryden. He thought it had effected a great improvement over the discourse of an earlier age; he maintained that "the fire of the English wit, which was before stifled under a constrained, melancholy way of breeding, began first to display its force, by mixing the solidity of our nation with the air and gaiety of our neighbors."

## II

If we examine the comedies of the period we find the striving for wit reflected in numberless scenes. It appears in *Love in a Tub*, the first of that long succession of comedies of manners for which the Restoration is famous:—

*Widow*: I did not imagine you were so foolishly conceited; is it your wit or your person, sir, that is so taking?

*Sir Fred*: Truly you are mistaken. I have no such great thoughts of the young man you see. Who ever knew a woman have so much reason to build her love upon merit? Have we not daily experience of Great Fortunes that fling themselves into the arms of vain idle fellows? Can you blame me then for standing upon my guard?

The display of wit flashed forth in *Love in a Tub* became so much a ruling passion that hardly a play could be written without the introduction of a character to illustrate the difference between true and false wit. In *Love in a Wood* Wycherley conceived Mr. Dapperwit, who is always impertinently straining to hit upon a new and striking comparison, as opposed to the true wits, Ranger and Vincent, who carry on repartee without effort or ostentation. Vincent rudely asks Dapperwit, "But why should you force your chawed jests, your damned ends of

your mouldy lampoons, and last year's sonnets, upon us? We are not all of your gusto." Dapperwit himself maintains the prevailing standards in a characteristically conceited speech: "He may drink, because he is obliged to the bottle for all the wit and courage he has; 'tis not free and natural like ours."

In Wycherley's plays Paris and Sparkish served to establish the tradition that flowered in Congreve's coxcombs, Brisk, Tattle, and Witwoud, all of whom are introduced not only to contrast with the real wits of the play but to add to the sparkle of the dialogue. Of Witwoud one of the characters remarks that he does not always want wit. To which Mirabell, a true wit, replies: "Not always: but as often as his memory fails him, and his commonplace of comparisons. He is a fool with a good memory, and some scraps of other folks' wit. He is one whose conversation can never be approved, yet it is now and then to be endured. He has indeed one good quality, he is not exceptionous; for he so passionately affects the reputation of understanding raillery, that he will construe an affront into a jest; and call downright rudeness and ill language, satire and fire."

How absorbing the search for wit was may be better seen in some of the less well-known pieces. In Shadwell's *A True Widow* Selfish is set down as "a coxcomb conceited of his beauty, wit, and breeding." Old Maggot is "a great enemy to wit." Young Maggot "runs mad after wit." Lump is "a mortal enemy to wit." Isabella appears as "a woman of wit and virtue," Theodosia as "a young lady of wit and fortune." The first requisite of a play came to be that it should be witty. Even the prosaic Shadwell complained of "such as hold that wit signifies nothing in a comedy," and a later writer ruefully declared that,—

... in this Age Design no Praise can get:  
You cry it Conversation wants and Wit.

The industrious Crowne satirically declaimed against the transference of current wit to the stage:—

Oh, Sirs, this is a monstrous witty age,  
Wit, grown a drug, has quite undone the stage.  
The mighty wits now come to a new play  
Only to taste the scraps they flung away.



## III

Wit in comedy, said Dryden, consists in "sharpness of conceit." The greatest ornament of dialogue was considered to be repartee, and repartee usually consisted of a see-saw interchange of unexpected similitudes, of paradoxes and antitheses, so phrased as to titillate and to dazzle. But constant surprise and contradiction can hardly be maintained without coming into clash with received opinion. The trite and the banal, however true, must be shunned. The commonplace must be avoided as leprosy. Meeting the demand for brilliancy leads almost inevitably to inversion of accepted relations, to the rejection of everyday opinion. "His wit shall excuse that," says one of Congreve's characters; "a wit should no more be sincere, than woman constant; one argues a decay of parts, as t'other of beauty."

This perverse quality of wit was illustrated in the naughty nineties by Oscar Wilde and the æsthetic movement. His scintillating dialogue derives most of its sparkle from the neat reversal of middle-class conceptions. The conversation of Mrs. Allonby in *A Woman of No Importance* at every word affronts bourgeois notions:—

*Mrs. Allonby:* Men always want to be a woman's first love. That is their clumsy vanity. We women have a more subtle instinct about things. What we like is to be a man's last romance.

*Lady Stutfield:* I see what you mean. It's very, very beautiful.

*Lady Hunstanton:* My dear child, you don't mean to tell me that you won't forgive your husband because he never loved any one else? Did you ever hear such a thing, Caroline? I am quite surprised.

*Lady Caroline:* Oh, women have become so highly educated, Jane, that nothing should surprise us now-a-days, except happy marriages. They apparently are getting remarkably rare.

*Mrs. Allonby:* Oh, they're quite out of date.

*Lady Stutfield:* Except amongst the middle classes, I have been told.

*Mrs. Allonby:* How like the middle classes!

The aphorisms of Lord Illingworth reflect the same kind of malicious inversion:—

*Gerald:* You have never been married, Lord Illingworth, have you?

*Lord Illingworth:* Men marry because they are tired; women because they are curious. Both are disappointed.

*Gerald*: But don't you think one can be happy when one is married?

*Lord Illingworth*: Perfectly happy. But the happiness of the married man, my dear Gerald, depends on the people he has not married.

In our own present, Bernard Shaw preserves his position of jaunty intellectual superiority by denying the validity of commonly accepted conceptions. By constantly shocking everyday notions, he is even by everyday people accepted as the wittiest of living dramatists. If commonplace ideas were the same as his ideas, he would lose most of the glitter that now envelops his figure with an electric aureole. How the two fathers gasp when Charteris talks in *The Philanderer*!—

*Charteris* (stopping him): Oh, it's no secret: everybody in the club guesses it. (To Cuthbertson): Has Grace never mentioned to you that she wants to marry me?

*Cuthbertson* (indignantly): She has mentioned that *you* want to marry *her*.

*Charteris*: Ah, but then it's not what I want, but what Grace wants that will weigh with *you*.

*Craven* (a little shocked): Excuse me Charteris: this *is* private. I'll leave you to yourselves. (Again moves toward the table).

*Charteris*: Wait a bit, Craven: you're concerned in this. Julia wants to marry me too.

*Craven*: (in a tone of the strongest remonstrance). Now really! Now upon my soul!

How stunned they are when one daughter accuses the other!—

*Craven*: May I ask the ground of complaint, Mrs. Tranfield?

*Grace*: Simply that Miss Craven is essentially a womanly woman, and, as such, not eligible for membership.

*Julia*: It's false. I'm not a womanly woman. I was guaranteed when I joined just as you were.

*Grace*: By Mr. Charteris, I think, at your own request. I shall call him as a witness to your thoroughly womanly conduct just now in his presence and Dr. Paramore's.

*Craven*: Cuthbertson, are they joking; or am I dreaming?

*Cuthbertson* (grimly): It's real, Dan: you're awake.

The wit of the Restoration largely exemplifies the same procedure. Its effectiveness often depends on its clash with the usual ways of thinking. Those playwrights, too, felt that to deny what our grandfathers believed is not witty, that the clash must be with the notions of fathers and friends, with the familiar notions that create the social atmosphere of the time, that the views which

are in entire agreement with our age do not raise even a question, let alone a smile or a laugh.

Viewed in this light, Mr. Palmer's contention, that the comedies of Etherege, Wycherley, and Congreve are moral because the authors accepted as unquestionable the manners they were depicting, is seen to be unfounded. The authors knew how witty they were, and tried to invent ever new ways of contradicting traditional English opinion. The close of Wycherley's *Love in a Wood* was assuredly not written in ignorance of middle-class ideals of marriage:—

*Lydia:* But if I could be desperate now and give you up my liberty, could you find in your heart to quit all other engagements, and voluntarily turn yourself to one woman, and she a wife too? Could you away with the insupportable bondage of matrimony?

*Ranger:* You talk of matrimony as irreverently as my Lady Flip-pant: the bondage of matrimony! no—

The end of marriage now is liberty.

And two are bound—to set each other free.

No, that passage reflected merely the tone of the courtly circle. That tone was reflected also in what Alithea says of a suitor in *The Country Wife*: "Nay, now, sir, I'm satisfi'd you are of the society of the wits and railleurs, since you cannot spare your friend, even when he is but too civil to you; but the surest sign is, since you are an enemy to marriage,—for that I hear you hate as much as business or bad wine." Marriage was naturally the favorite subject of ridicule, upon which any new saying was hailed with applause. Sparkish, the would-be wit, bids for such applause in his "By my honour, we men of wit condole for our deceased brother in marriage, as much as for one dead in earnest: I think that was prettily said of me, ha, Harcourt?" And the volatile Witwoud in *The Way of the World* harps on the same string with a defter touch: "Fainall, how does your lady? Gad, I say anything in the world to get this fellow out of my head. I beg pardon that I should ask a man of pleasure, and the town, a question at once so foreign and domestic."

Like the authors of their being, Wycherley and Congreve, these wits were aiming to be witty. They were aping the tone of the town. But is it not obvious that they never would have made such a topic subject for pleasantries if Restoration society had been so unconsciously corrupt as Mr. Palmer makes it out to have been? It was only because of their clear consciousness

of the traditional belief that love and faithfulness accompany marriage that they uttered these witticisms. It was only because bourgeois standards were so perfectly familiar that the circle of Whitehall had an inexhaustible source of paradox. Otherwise much of the most brilliant dialogue in English comedy would have seemed to its first auditors little more than a series of platitudes.

## IV

What Professor Nettleton most objects to is not the language employed by the characters but the incidents introduced into the plot. He declares of *The Country Wife* that "Horner, who prosecutes his vices through an assumption perhaps the most atrocious in all Restoration comedy, is Wycherley's real hero. Ingenuity is prostituted in the service of animal passion." Mr. Palmer declares that Horner's "famous project, upon which every situation of the play so brilliantly hangs, at once puts him beyond the cool estimates of morality; and it would be absurd in a critical reader to feel toward Mr. Horner as he would feel toward an actual twentieth-century social figure of Mr. Horner's character and habits. But it must not be forgotten that Mr. Horner is an imaginative reflection of a society that really existed, and that *The Country Wife* was written from the point of view of an actual and definite code of morality."

We cannot but see that Professor Nettleton is speaking from the point of view of 1914. We must also agree with Sparkish in this play that the age of 1673 was very frank. The court circle harbored no delusions concerning its own conduct. Indeed, it took some pride in flouting the moral prepossessions of the middle classes. Its members engaged in wild pranks not merely to furnish outlet for high spirits but likewise to scandalize the citizens. Yet even the most reckless of them, Rochester, acknowledged at times the justice of bourgeois judgments. In one of his letters to Savile he denied the "hideous deportment" with which he had been charged, adding: "I ever thought you an extraordinary man, and must now think you such a friend, who, being a courtier, as you are, can love a man, whom it is the great mode to hate."

The "actual and definite code of morality" that Mr. Palmer finds in *The Country Wife* becomes on a really critical investigation a criticism of everyday standards in that stratum of society. Horner speaks as the mouthpiece of this criticism. He discovers

that the women of quality who talk so much about their reputation are careful of nothing else. He is the means of punishing the worn-out rake, Pinchwife, who has married merely to keep one wench all to himself. He proves the uselessness of ignorance, constraint, and suspicion in keeping a wife faithful. Finally, Pinchwife's sister, the virtuous Alithea, demonstrates that knowledge, freedom, and trust are far more efficacious in preserving a woman's affection and fidelity. The criticism was rude and unrestrained even in that frank age, but not even the idlest spectator could miss the point of the criticism, and the code applied was surely centuries older than the Restoration.

The like is true of other comedies of the period. The acme of perfection in that type, *The Way of the World*, displays the same code. Even the worst female characters in it pay tribute to virtue by striving to preserve their reputation, and the heroine is the affected, capricious, outspoken, but virtuous Millamant. Some of the minor drama is even more distinctly an unwitting tribute to the morality which that age is by some writers supposed to have ignored. Shadwell's *A True Widow* presents as heroines two women of wit and virtue who are at length won by the fine gentlemen who seek them in marriage. Crowne's *Sir Courtly Nice* is a swift succession of tricks to outwit a jealous and suspicious brother who is eventually convinced that "virtue is a woman's only guard." One might go on thus indefinitely. Of course that full-blooded interest in amorous intrigue and that delight in salacious dialogue which is now relegated to the lowest type of music-hall was then an element in the most finished comedies. But it is nevertheless true that Restoration society was not so scandalously immoral as twentieth century indignation has painted it, nor so complacently satisfied with its aberrations from the traditional standards as the devil's advocate would persuade us to believe. Indeed, it took a perverse pleasure in those aberrations. The worship of wit in the circle of Whitehall gave to the attitude and to the purpose of Restoration playwrights, and lent to the dialogue of that notorious period, a highly colored affectation of immorality which, if accepted unsuspectingly, does not truly represent the conduct and the ideals of the London of that generation or even of the courtly circle which the drama was primarily written to please.

DUDLEY MILES.

New York City.



## BOOK REVIEWS

THE SALON AND ENGLISH LETTERS. CHAPTERS ON THE INTERRELATIONS OF LITERATURE AND SOCIETY IN THE AGE OF JOHNSON. By Chauncey Brewster Tinker. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1915. Pp. 290, illustrated; index; \$2.25.

The age of Johnson, though perhaps less productive in the field of pure literature than most others, is one of peculiar charm because of the unusual, almost unique, human interest forever attached to it by such books as Boswell's great biography, Macaulay's scarcely less great epitome, and Fanny Burney's Diary, and because of the personal charm of such men as Johnson and Goldsmith. Professor Tinker, in his new volume on *The Salon and English Letters*, has viewed it from a new angle; and though it can scarcely be said that he has made any positive addition to our store of information, he has at least written a book both suggestive and informing, and withal entertaining.

The main idea of the book is to show how the personal social relation, especially as developed in the English adaptation of the French salon, contributed to the formation of certain types of literature, especially biography and letter writing as we find it in the unsurpassed masterpieces of the eighteenth century. Four chapters are devoted to the French salon, discussing its origin and character in a manner at once scholarly and pleasing. Though the customary minutiae of the graduation thesis are eschewed, it is fair to say that Professor Tinker has given adequate detail and references to substantiate his statements and his conclusions. In this field, of course, he has had many predecessors; the only part of it in which we get rather more than a summary of other books is in a chapter on English authors in Parisian salons. Here the chief figures are Walpole, Gibbon, Hume, and Sterne, leaving out of account the "voyage imaginaire" to the salons by the gifted imagination of Goldsmith—it does not harm us or him that he should have fabricated a good part, or the whole, of his experiences. In comment upon these chapters, particularly the last, one may say that it does not appear that the salon of Paris had any considerable influence upon any of these men save Walpole,

The very title of the second part of the book is apt to awaken the spirit of controversy, if not of contradiction. Was there, in truth, such a thing as an English salon? I confess that to me the attempts of sundry literary ladies to imitate the French salon seem such lamentable failures that I prefer affirming outright that the salon did not exist. I believe we cannot go far wrong in saying that the different tone of English society,—whether we guess that the difference arises from the national boorishness and lack of urbanity of the English, or from the native spirit of independence which makes good in greater vigor what we lose in polish,—made it as impossible to establish a true and live salon as it has ever been to establish an Academy to give laws to English literature. Such a salon as Mrs. Montagu's, upon which Professor Tinker has a chapter, either gathers the mere nonentities of letters, or the mere society dilettanti, or becomes another way of administering patronage to such authors as will discreetly flatter the lady of the salon. It surely does nothing to stimulate letters through the mutual criticism and emulation that mark the true salon. In justice to the author it should be said that he is aware of the limitations of the quasi-salon established in England, and does not claim too much; and in these chapters we renew acquaintance in pleasant fashion with several of those literary ladies whose tiny lights once shone so fair, and with some, like Lady Mary and Fanny Burney, whose light still shines.

The third section of the book, being chiefly about such brilliant talkers and writers as Johnson, Fanny Burney, and Walpole, is less for the specialist and more for the reader who will enjoy a review of such truly living personages. Here the author makes apparent the full force of that social spirit which is but *nominis umbra* about the Mermaid tavern, which is the unfailing charm about the work of Boswell and of the great diarist and letter writer. Professor Tinker writes with grace, and more than once with an epigrammatic snap, as when he remarks: "I cannot but feel that Chesterfield liked the salon. What else in heaven or earth was there for such a man to like?" But the reviewer will be pardoned for suggesting that, particularly in the last portion of the book, there is too little definiteness or positiveness in enforcing his conclusions; with all regard for the

critic's duty in the way of restraint and cautious judgment, I think he would have done better to follow somewhat more the forthright, dogmatic old Doctor whom he writes of, who so loudly enunciated and so vigorously upheld his judgments whether right or wrong. In his comments upon Boswell or upon Johnson the author is clear and just; in his effort to make the reader appreciate what value he would place upon the salon and the social influence, he seems less happy. PIERCE BUTLER.

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BEYOND DISILLUSION. A DRAMATIC STUDY OF MODERN MARRIAGE. By William Norman Guthrie. The Petrus Stuyvesandt Book Guild at St. Mark's-in-the-Bouwerie, Manhattan.

Holy matrimony, which was commended of Saint Paul to be honorable among all men, has received scant honor at the hands of many modern playwrights. The present drama, however, attempts a defence of the institution and a solution of its problems. A brilliant architect, harassed by the worries of a domesticity which includes four noisy children, and obliged to do work which does not satisfy his artistic ideals, determines to leave children and wife. To the latter he confesses that she no longer represents the ideal which he once found in her. Later in the play, the wife too deserts the children that she may become a dancer. In the last act the husband sees the wife dance to the music of his own composing and finds that she again expresses his ideal. So after both have independently discovered their ideals in different spheres of activity, they are reunited in love and return to domesticity.

In the Foreword the author suggests that a bridegroom and a bride should be respectively "prepared, nay, passionately eager, to be crucified on the cross which the other should represent, because of a holy devotion to the ideal of fellowship and loyalty, and the devout hope of offspring better than themselves and of a nobler civilization to supersede that of their generation." The characters in the present play are not willing to suffer such crucifixion. It is rather a begging of the question to settle it as the author does. He admits indeed in the Foreword that he has "resorted to what may seem an improbable solution of his problem, thinking it far less serious to be taxed with improba-

bility in plot, considering how very extraordinary are the happenings of life, than to have the ideal purpose of his work miscarry."

But the trouble is that in real life the ideal settlement must be confronted with just this simple question: Will it work? And even granting that the solution lies in the independent development of husband and wife so that they meet on the highest planes of their respective personalities, even then the development of the wife's personality through public dancing will not commend itself as a practical solution to most matrons approaching middle-age.

Moreover, the present characters are not sufficiently life-like to make the solution convincing. Like those in such a play as Shaw's *Marriage*, they are to a great extent only masks through which the author discusses his problem. But for the keen wit of the earlier play there is substituted a rather flaccid rhetoric. Thus: "Since these things have occurred, and words have been spoken that ripened my decision irrespective of any opinions my family and my intimate friends may cherish"—which is the language of The Polite Letter Writer and not of real conversation. The talk of the children which attempts to be realistically slangy strikes me as forced and unnatural.

The play's moral is undeniably on the side of the angels, but the author does not speak with the tongues of either angels or real men, and his progress is pedestrian rather than winged. His muse, like that of so much well-meaning fiction, plants one foot squarely on the commonplace and points the other upward in a rather indefinite direction towards the stars and idealism. This attitude is less suggestive of advance than of instability.

In an Afterword follows a sequence of seven very Meredithian sonnets, in the course of which the author finds occasion to ask,—

"What shall to th' spirit its extreme bliss grant  
as,—ever th' quickening pulse and thrill of growth:  
to reach, expansive, wrestling from the loth  
stark elements their nurture ministrant  
for toppling bloom and fruit? or, calm to plant  
the mailed heel archangelic on behemoth  
and spewing leviathan? or heavenly wroth  
like solar photosphere leap, blaze, and pant?"

We frankly confess our inability to answer these questions.

L. WARDLAW MILES.

THE LORD OF MISRULE, AND OTHER POEMS. By Alfred Noyes. With frontispiece in colours by Spencer Baird Nichols. The Frederick A. Stokes Company. New York. October, 1915. \$1.60.

This volume of shorter poems, the first that Mr. Noyes has published since the collected edition of 1913, shows no considerable divergence in philosophy or form from what we have come to expect as his normal. We observe here the same healthy optimism, the same range of subject-matter, the same perfection of rhythm and beauty of diction which, on the whole, have characterized his previous work.

The passing, however, of two years, even quiet ones, would be likely to show change if not advance in any save a moribund poet, particularly in a young one whose country is engaged in a world-war. Accordingly we find poems inspired by the British fleet of dreadnoughts, the sinking of the *Lusitania*, the death of an army aviator; poems also of love for England and belief in English destiny. England's past receives attention, too. The title-poem and several other pieces deal romantically with themes from Cædmon's time to Shakespeare's, and among much that is fine in the volume the greatest claim to distinction is probably possessed by these. The exotically beautiful past of Greek mythology was felicitously handled in "Niobe," "Actæon," and other earlier poems, but from *Sherwood* and *Tales of the Mermaid Tavern* on, Mr. Noyes has shown more and more interest in the equally beautiful yet more robust past of his native land. Few poets, indeed, of any period have drawn upon this material so largely and with such success. The volume further contains several good love lyrics and an especially noteworthy modern fairy poem. Some of the subjects, moreover, are drawn from Canada and the United States.

In structure, also, Mr. Noyes shows reaching out. Rhymeless verse is not absent from the volume, and "Astrid" is an experiment in initial rhyme. Yet it is safe to predict that a poet who has made such a phenomenal achievement with the traditional forms will do little with an innovation so revolutionary as the latter.

*The Lord of Misrule* was highly satisfying upon the first reading, more so upon the second. The book is the natural



sequel of the past work of the author, but has sufficient individuality to make us interestedly look forward to what he may write in the future.

JOHN OWEN BEATY.

JOHN M. SYNGE: A FEW PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS WITH BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES. By John Masefield. New York: The Macmillan Company.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE: A BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY. By Earnest Rhys. New York: The Macmillan Company.

Of the two volumes before us it is perhaps natural to deal with the brochure by John Masefield on his fellow-poet Synge before taking up the longer and professedly more critical estimate of Tagore by Mr. Rhys; both because the former is so much the slighter work, and because its protagonist and to a certain extent the movement to which he belonged are now a part of literary history, while the neo-romantic and neo-religious ideas and ideals of Tagore are but now finding fertile ground, at least here in the West.

Among the group of enthusiasts that rallied to the side of Yeats and Lady Gregory when they launched the so-called Celtic Revival, none was more talented or more picturesque than Synge. They were all aflame with visions of the possibilities of giving tongue to the hitherto silent feelings of their race. They all wanted to catch "the music of the waters of the western sea and its isles" in order to perpetuate it in literature. But Synge went a bit deeper into the Irish character than the rest. He alone knew the childish thirst of the Celt for the violent and supernatural, as well as their naïvely imaginative quest of the beautiful. As Yeats himself says, Synge "loved only what was wild in its [Ireland's] people, and in the 'grey and wintry sides of many glens.'" His imagination impersonalized even his own experiences, so that like all children of Romance he looked at life and his fellow-men (in particular those of his beloved Arran) as from a distance, as though he were but an onlooker at their aspirations and their struggles. "He was a new Adam and saw things as they looked on the first morning." When with this intensity of insight and this imaginative gift he wrote of people he knew or strange folk-tales he had heard, a *Playboy of the Western World* resulted,—a masterpiece that even the Irish attacked, it was so true a caricature.

Mr. Masfield in the present volume has adopted much the same method and manner that Mr. Yeats did in *his* 'personal reminiscences' of their common friend. When read together, a strikingly composite picture of the real Synge is gained, since the one touches rather the personal characteristics of the man, and the other his spiritual background and artistic achievements. But both emphasize his strange aloofness, his "golden silences," his excellence as a companion on a journey, his gypsy-like wanderings to wildest corners of Europe and Ireland in search of atmosphere and life, and the masterful though unconscious art which he wrought out of his colorful experiences. When the biography of Synge comes to be written, both these monographs will be treasured as first-hand accounts of a notable literary figure of our time by fellow-workmen who knew and loved him.

It is not such a far cry from Synge to Tagore, for though they are essentially different in many ways they both belong to the great household of Romance that surrounds with a like sort of faery glow such differing offspring as Homer and Shakespeare, Villon and Æschylus. But even more directly Synge and Tagore are comparable, since both try to give voice to the genius of their particular race, to preserve its folk-life, the local atmosphere, to catch the cloud-effects on the national spiritual horizon. In fact, Tagore's short stories have been traced in influence to the very door of the Celtic movement, Yeats in particular being credited with having inspired the great Hindu. But, on the other hand, the differences are quite as marked as the resemblances, and Tagore cannot be made a Celt even by the literary critic.

Mr. Rhys has written a striking biography on a subject that might well have discouraged an Occidental. So ably has he completed his task, however, that it is difficult to see how the lovers of Tagore can long be without this first adequate interpretation of their inspiring teacher. For it is in the rôle of teacher that his manifold activities and writings can best be studied, and it is in his boys' school at Bolpur that all his talents find their richest and most enduring increase. From the first to the last chapter Mr. Rhys touches on so many matters of

importance that a review of the volume can only be a series of pregnant digressions.

First of all, we have the pictures of the chief events in the singularly quiet life of Tagore—his scholarly, deeply religious father who exerted such a strong influence on the boy, his own lonely life as overseer of the family estate, his marriage, the birth of his children and the subsequent bereavements, his mental awakening, and its gradual fruition, until now he is the great prophet of his people. In fact it is Tagore's phenomenal versatility that seems the most remarkable thing about him. How one writer can produce short stories, plays, poems, and philosophic treatises, each superbly simple in thought, and clear as a flute melody in language (even when translated into English) is striking enough, since each of these literary forms he has brought to its definitive shape. But when to this we add his sweeping religious and educational reforms, his patronage of economic improvements (in which his son, a graduate of one of our western schools of agriculture is the leader), and his intensely patriotic championship of everything likely to help India and forward the growth of love in the world, we realize that we are dealing with one of the great men of the age, and that restraint in the expression of our appreciation of this genius is hardly necessary.

Two phases of this work require particular mention—the two outposts of his spiritual thought. One is his love of child life. "Nature shut her hands," he says, "and laughingly asked every day, 'What have I got inside,' and nothing seemed impossible." We are here in the presence of a super-Stevenson. A re-reading of "The Crescent Moon" will show it even better than Rhys does. And then after "The Gardener," where temporal love is portrayed, we reach "Gitanjali," where timeless love is so wonderfully interpreted, we reach "Sadhana, the Realization of Life," and we are at the zenith of his thought. This last volume may well come to mean a great deal to this war-torn world of ours, for it unites the essence of the Christian and Hindu religions—the two really vital faiths of our time—in such a way that the follower of either can freely accept the new, which is not so much a compromise as the realization of the essential

unity underlying both. Tempering Hindu monism with Christian individualism and Hindu ascetism with Christian belief in action, Tagore may well lead a religious revival, the like of which has not been seen for twenty centuries. Indeed one of the most persistent thoughts that press for expression as one reads him is that in many ways he resembles the other Great Teacher who taught the love of God and the brotherhood of man, and lived as he taught.

But, more calmly, it is possible that Tagore enthusiasts may overrate their guide, philosopher, and friend. It is still too soon to say. But we can all agree with a writer in the *Quarterly Review* who says that Tagore has given us the "highest expression of man's belief in God that has appeared in our generation."

W. S. RUSK.

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THE HIGHER PATRIOTISM. By John Grier Hibben. New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons.

THE ROAD TOWARD PEACE. By Charles W. Eliot. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co.

These two volumes, dealing with the various problems that have related this country to the World War, are well worthy of survival when the greater part of the deluge of books that have dealt with the war are of interest only to bibliographers. It is noteworthy that the distinguished authors have adopted fundamentally the same position,—that preparedness *against* war is the chief duty of the United States at present.

In President Hibben's small book there are gathered three addresses and one essay. While emphasizing in all of them the ideal of "America in the world's service," he is equally emphatic that the best way to accomplish this ideal is to adequately equip our own defences so as to be able to back our protests and diplomatic notes with more than moral force. In the address delivered at the Lake Mohonk Peace Conference this spring, he shows clearly that militarism and preparedness are fundamentally different and can remain so as long as the chief endeavor of our nation is to help mankind. In fact Dr. Hibben may be classed with the more farsighted pacifists.

From time to time since the opening of the war ex-President

Eliot has contributed to the *New York Times* small articles dealing with the progress of the war, the bearing of its problems on this country, and the lessons to be learned. These small essays make up the body of his book, though several addresses delivered both before and after August, 1914, are also included. Dr. Eliot is strongly pro-Ally, but his acknowledged preferences do not limit his ability to see to the bottom of the matters he discusses, and since he takes up practically every phase of the war, in their present collected form his writings make a most readable and valuable history of the eventful year recently closed. His ardent pacifism, coupled with his interest in the formation of an international navy strong enough to enforce obedience to an ever-growing body of international law, runs through all the chapters. While there is nothing essentially new in the ground he covers, the matters he discusses are treated in such a scholarly, clear-sighted way that it does not seem probable a better treatment of the questions involved will appear for some time, and when it does we shall still have a first-hand account of real importance.

W. S. RUSK.

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THE RIVET IN GRANDFATHER'S NECK. By James Branch Cabell. New York: Robert M. McBride & Company. \$1.35 net.

The author calls his book "a comedy of limitations," and yet it is far more of a tragedy, unless we look at it from the ironical, almost cynical point of view of Mr. Cabell himself. Though to judge from his name, he is a scion of some of the old families of Virginia, it is clear that he has grown tired of the over-idealization of the South, for he lays bare with clever strokes and unsparing pen the deadening conservatism, the unyielding prejudices, the complacent self-satisfaction of the Old South, not hesitating even in his iconoclastic mood to retouch with impious hand the traditional portrait of the 'famous Southern beauty.' "Nothing," declares one of his women characters, "was expected of us save to be beautiful and to condescend to be made much of, and that is our tragedy." The reaction is a natural one, and yet one feels that the author here and elsewhere in the book has voiced his discontent with almost too brutal frankness, in spite of the fact that he puts the criticism in the mouth of a woman.



Mr. Cabell, however, would not have us consider him as a wanton idol-breaker, a radical scorner of tradition, but as one who would substitute a saner, more common-sense view of the past and its achievements. Nevertheless, with all its ease and brilliance, the book leaves a distinctly disagreeable impression. There is a hardness of outline, a want of sympathy, a sardonic humor, all of which arouses antagonism or leads to a hopeless view of the future.

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ESSAYS IN SOCIAL JUSTICE. By Thomas Nixon Carver. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1915. Pp. vii + 429. \$2.00.

Under this somewhat alluring title of *Essays in Social Justice* Professor Carver has given us a series of articles which are fundamentally discussions of economic theory. Those who expect any description of our social and ethical relations which is easy and pleasant to read will be disappointed. The book is unsuited for anyone who is not willing to bring it to clear and consecutive thinking.

The author has performed at least two valuable services in this work. He has developed an objective concept of social justice which challenges the too-prevalent sentimental morality of the time. And he has described the relations between economics and ethics in a way which will provoke vigorous thought, whatever may be the attitude of mind of the reader toward the author's opinion. Both these services meet a need of the present time when economic and ethical relations are becoming more and more interwoven.

Some of Professor Carver's fundamental concepts will call forth a sturdy protest. The theory that our moral ideals and our social, political, and legal institutions are grouped around the idea of economic scarcity does not seem to leave much room for spiritual and ideal forces in our civilization. The theory that practically identifies qualities insuring survival with moral qualities has not said the final word until, at least, there is a re-defining of terms. At times the words of the author seem perilously close to upholding materialism. For those readers to whom such views are disquieting the excellent qualities of the book will be dulled or lost.

JAMES G. STEVENS.

BLACK AND WHITE IN THE SOUTHERN STATES. A Study of the Race Problem in the United States from a South African Point of View. By Maurice S. Evans. London and New York: Longmans, Green, & Co.

Mr. Evans's, point of view has already received literary statement in his *Black and White in South-East Africa*, a book which was appreciatively received in South Africa and England. It is well that someone who "knows Africa" should give his views of the Negro Problem in the South in addition to Sir Harry Johnson's statement of the case several years ago. There is nothing new in the book, and it shows the usual failure to recognize De Tocqueville's principle that equality is the essence of democracy and the psychological and historical facts that all the "equalities" are at bottom based on potential social equality, which in turn depends on the right of intermarriage. Nevertheless, our author, in his summing-up (chapter thirty), admits that the white man will ever "rule and lead in the South." It is pathetic that he should express the hope, a few lines further down (p. 275), that there will be such an increase of Negro communities, little *imperia in imperiis*, that there will be a furtherance of "mutual tolerance." As if mutual tolerance were possible when all Americans claim equal rights and yet one race insists on leading and ruling the other merely by rights of race! If the Negro submits to this arrangement, he is a serf to all intents and purposes; if he does not submit, how will trouble be avoided?

Mr. Evans admits (1) that most skilled observers are pessimistic as to the future, and (2) that the Negro is inferior to the whites; but he seems to base at least some of his hopefulness on the proceedings of the Southern Sociological Congress held at Nashville several years ago. If he will now, in the year of grace 1916, ask himself what have been the practical results of that meeting and others like unto it, and what has become of the scheme for white and colored college and high-school students to "unite in social study and work" (p. 274), his tone of hopefulness may undergo some modification. He will find that pious palaver has been the bane of much well-intended study of the Negro Problem, and that divers Southern "leaders of thought and culture" do not understand the "hill-billies," the "red-necks," the "wool-hat boys," who really dominate the situation.

One little sentence in the preface of the book (p. vi) will enlighten the Southerner as to the significance of Mr Evans's honest and painstaking work so far as its real effectiveness is concerned. He says: ". . . I stayed at the homes of both black and white." Let him get the Southern white's reaction to that statement, and he will appreciate better the fatuousness of his kindly optimism.

T. P. BAILEY.

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THE INCARNATION. By Francis J. Hall. New York: Longmans, Green & Co

This volume forms the sixth in the author's proposed series of ten, advertised as the "long desired Anglican summa of doctrine," "designed to constitute a connected treatment of the entire range of Catholic doctrine." Dr. Hall's position may be illustrated by combining his dedication "to the blessed memory of St. Leo the Great, whose epistle of Flavian called 'the Tome' has for many centuries exhibited the truth concerning Jesus Christ," with the following statement: "The writer believes that the Holy Spirit is employing the labors of modern scholars to purge from the church's traditional faith all post-apostolic accretions, to bring certain elements of it into clearer light, to enhance its ethical value, and to increase its persuasive power" (p. 29). In spite of the author's concessions to modern scholarship, he generally cites the results of it, from which he dissents, and remains at heart a fifth-century Catholic.

Dr. Hall's book will not escape the general criticism of those who feel the sterility of much theological controversy. The dogmatist attempts to explain matters which the Christ Himself left indefinite. The author is at his best when he is not attempting too close theological analysis, but is summarizing truths which are beyond controversy and to which Protestant and Catholic alike will gladly subscribe; as, for example, in his eloquent estimate of the personality and power and essential humanity of the Christ (pp. 201 ff.).

J. B. T.

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INTER-AMERICAN ACQUAINTANCES. By Charles Lyon Chandler. Sewanee, Tennessee: The University Press. \$1.08.

This interesting and timely book accomplishes the double purpose of showing that the example and the moral and material

aid of the United States were important factors in the wars for independence in South America, and that the fundamental ideas on which the Monroe Doctrine and Pan-American union are based were forecast in the thoughts and writings of North and South Americans, rather than in those of Europe. Mr. Chandler has rendered an important service in publishing this excellent historical study of our inter-American relations. A.

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NEWSPAPER EDITING. By Grant Milnor Hyde. New York: D. Appleton & Company. \$1.50 net.

ESSENTIALS OF JOURNALISM. By H. F. Harrington and T. T. Frankenberg. Boston and New York: Ginn & Company. \$1.75.

TYPICAL NEWSPAPER STORIES. Selected and edited by H. F. Harrington. Boston and New York: Ginn & Company. \$1.60.

The three volumes listed above form an excellent working library for a college course in journalism and for the sanctum of a college newspaper editor. The first is a manual for editors, copy-readers, and students of newspaper desk-work; the second presents in an interesting and systematic way both the theory and practice of newspaper work; and the third contains a compilation of representative stories clipped from newspapers from day to day, judiciously selected, systematically arranged, and accompanied by critical comment, so as to show the student how other men have set down the facts of their experience and observation.

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ELEMENTARY LATIN DICTIONARY. By Charlton T. Lewis. With an Appendix of Names and Persons and Places met in the Latin Authors commonly Studied in the First Two Years of the College Course; compiled by Hugh MacMaster Kingery. Cincinnati and New York: American Book Company. \$2.00.

This abridgment of the author's Latin Dictionary for Schools first appeared in 1890; five years later it was carefully revised, and now it appears in expanded form with the useful Appendix of Proper Names. The marks of quantity are indicated in every word, and many illustrative citations are given to show the uses of a given word by classic writers. It is well printed in handy form at a reasonable price so as to meet the needs of the average college student.